# Saturday Review

JUNE 29, 1957 / 25¢

RECORDINGS

*Earle Hyman as Shakespeare's "Othello" at Stratford, Connecticut. (See BROADWAY POSTSCRIPT)*

## THE CATTY SCHOOL OF WRITING

By Ernest Earnest

## BERLIOZ'S "TROYENS" AT COVENT GARDEN

By Ernest Newman

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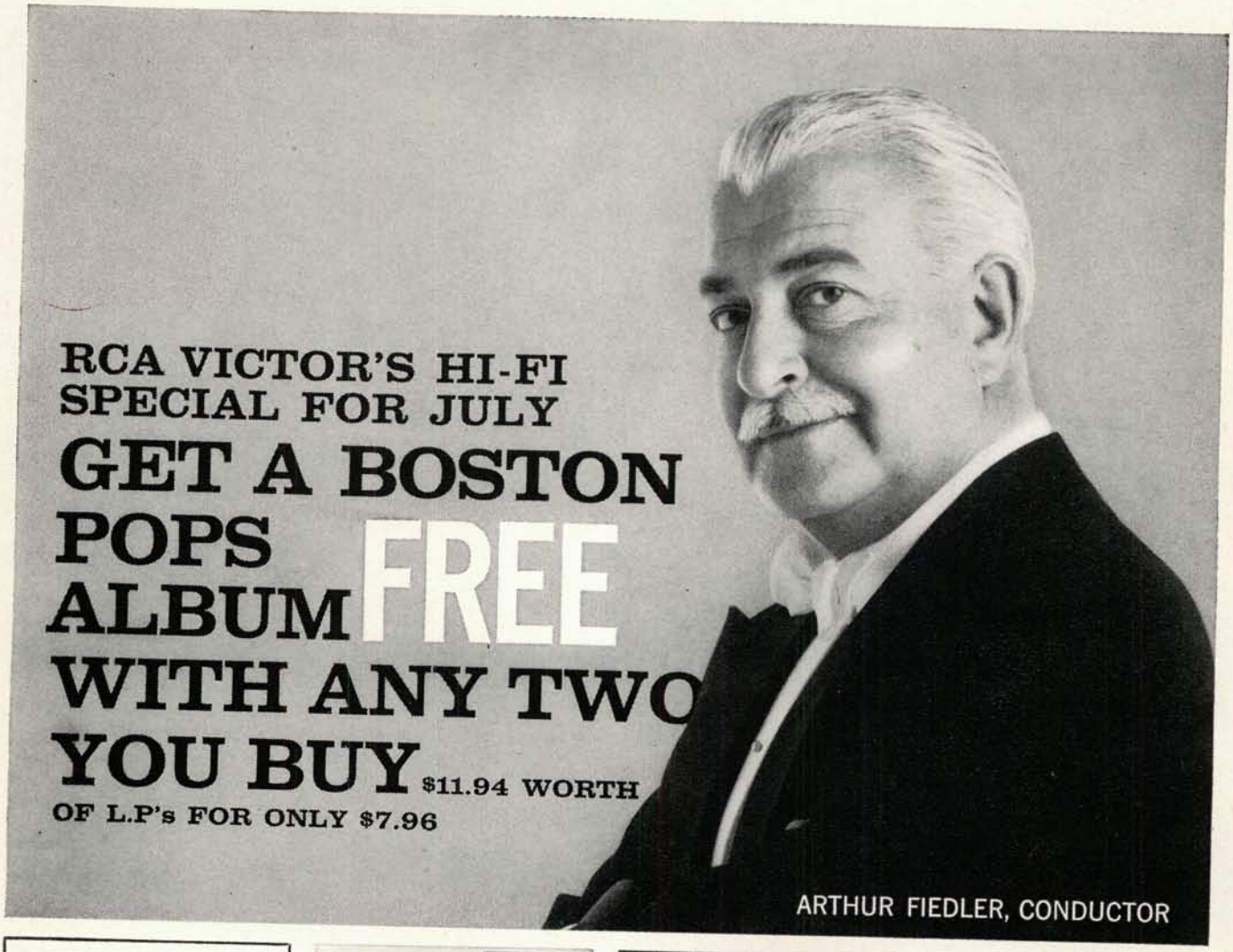
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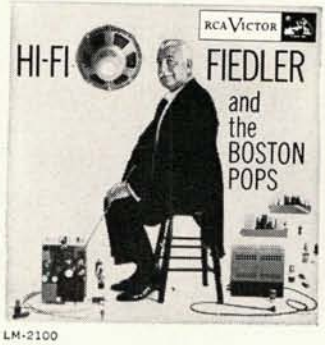

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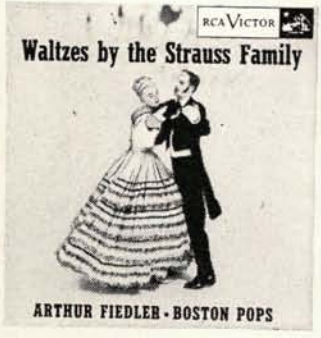

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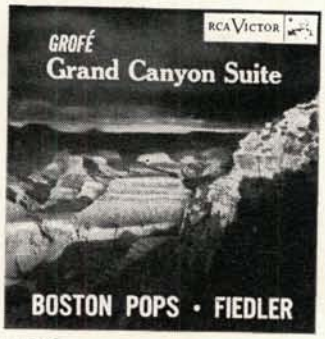

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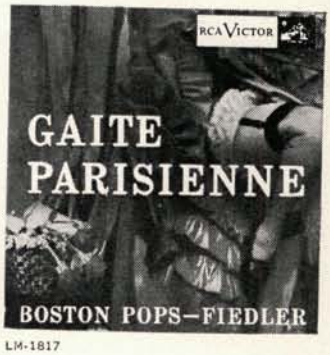

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*The Saturday Review*

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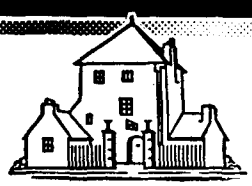

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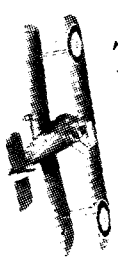

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# TRADE Winds

BARBADOS, B. W. I.

**WHENEVER I THINK** about my travels in foreign countries, all I can usually recall is sitting in the back seat of a car while a local driver goes lickety-split along narrow roads, and little native children turn and stare as the door handles brush their chins and they somehow escape with their lives. A local driver named Prescott has not altered the picture for me. He's been driving for years, he says, and never had no trouble. Nevertheless, I noticed that when he passed a huge building with barred windows he identified it as the jail and police station and braked so violently that the gears rattled.

Barbados is one island that Columbus failed to raise during his many trips through the West Indies, and it has been sort of like that ever since. An American would say that the island is off the beaten track, because it has been fairly difficult to get here from the States. To those who *do* make it, off the beaten track are words of gold, for the twenty-one-by-fourteen-mile coral island is friendly and unspoiled, the pace reminding one of some Somerset Maugham-type outpost where everybody is happy with their lot (but seething with pent-up passions beneath the surface!).

Prescott says there is no crime on Barbados. The jail seemed pretty big, though, and he admitted there are folks in it. I asked him,

"If there is no crime, how come there are criminals in jail?"

"Oh, sah, there no criminals in there. People only there for lawlessness."

I came down here looking for the trade winds and, sure enough, here they are. They blew Columbus in this direction, and now they blow airplanes and ships. But not enough to suit the Barbadians ("Bajans," they say). They have always had a brisk tourist trade in the wintertime, but not enough Americans, and not enough people of any kind in the spring, summer, and fall. They've never had the most satisfactory service to the island, and it was only a few weeks ago that the first U.S. airline began regular flights to Barbados. That is Pan American World Airways. Now you can Clipper it straight through from New York to Barbados throughout the entire year.

Now people are beginning to associate Barbados with "Island in the Sun," because this is where they made the movie a few months ago. However, if they load the island with American tourists, should we instead call the Bajans "the tribe that lost its head?" I dunno. They are determined to build up their tourist trade, and supplement the "one-crop economy," that one crop being sugar cane. For the tourists, of course, the one crop is rum. Many an American will come a cropper when he finds delicious Barbados rum at about a dollar a delicious bottle.

Just in case the American tourists don't smarten up this sleepy colonial

dreamland, Gulf Oil has spent $6,000,000 drilling for you know what. They've struck natural gas, which is not what they've been looking for, but it is being piped into the capital, Bridgetown, and presumably is lightening some burden or other.

Next, the government is spending about $15,000,000 to build a deepwater harbor so that big ships can dock here. (Now they have to unload by lighters.) Last but not least, a tourist board is being formed. All I hope is that this entire pattern develops slowly, so that I can get to Barbados a few more times before it changes. That's an anti-tourist, selfish attitude, but it's the way I feel.

An editorial in a recent issue of the interesting monthly magazine, *The Bajan*, said this, in its entirety:

> Barbados needs a new landing stage with an attractive information bureau staffed by pretty girls offering free rum drinks. It also needs a Post Office with beautiful young ladies available to answer questions and promoting the sales of Barbadian and other British Caribbean stamps.

The first important American tourist to arrive here was George Washington. Of course, he was only nineteen years old and really a Britisher, a major in the Army at the time. But he did live here for two months, along with his brother Laurence, who was here to recuperate from the vapors. The only

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big question now is, where did George snooze? There's a building in Bridgetown with a familiar designation: "George Washington Slept Here." But no one really believes it. (The latest important American to sleep here was Adlai Stevenson, in March. We know where he rested his head: in the home of his host, Mr. Ronald Tree.)

There aren't many things for a visiting American to buy, for the local handicrafts are limited mostly to the aforementioned rum and sugar cane. You can get sweaters from Scotland, have a suit made very cheaply, find some attractive imports from Italy, and even get a beautiful scarf with a map of Barbados printed on it—made in Japan. Everything is mighty reasonable.

The sightseeing is rewarding. In addition to the house where Washington didn't sleep, there are some interesting churches around the island, a quaint fishing village called Bathsheba, on the Atlantic side, and of course about a dozen factories where, if the season is right, you can see them squash the cane and boil it and all that, so that sugar comes out.

And so we say farewell to this peaceful, tranquil, comfortable island which has been a favorite holiday resort for English and Canadian families for years. "This," says a Pan Am spokesman, "accounts for the prevailing British flavor of the colony." Whatever it's called, it's terrific.

**WHILE I'VE BEEN** knocking myself out following the trade winds here to Barbados, my colleague, Pat Patterson, has been similarly hard at work in a desperate and, I think, successful attempt to prove that the cooling breezes range as far north as Bermuda. The Bajans should have those trade winds: 100,000 Americans to Bermuda per year (less than 2,000 to Barbados)! Actually, the real trade winds don't hit Bermuda till summer, but while waiting for them Patterson sent me the following report:

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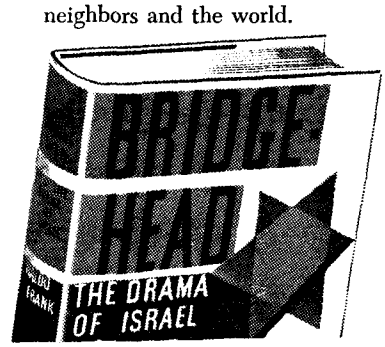


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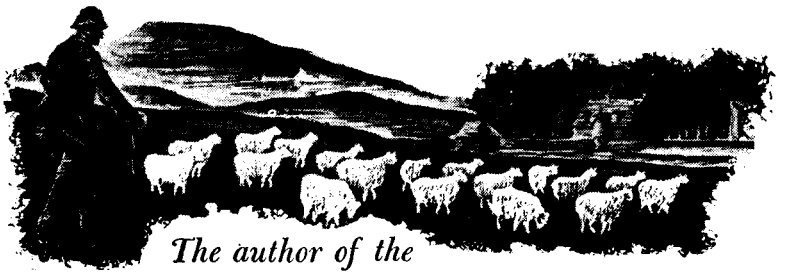

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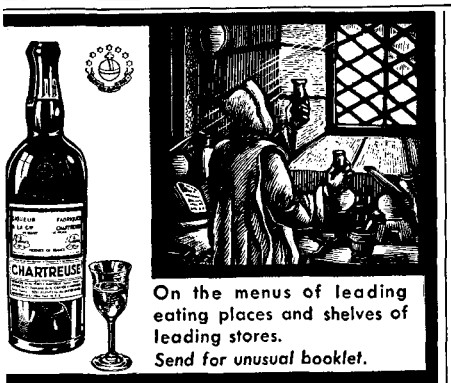


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muda to participate along with Canadian, British, and Bermudian troops in a unique, spectacular display of precision military drilling and heart-tingling band music.

This was the 1957 Bermuda Searchlight Tattoo, which enthralled the more than 22,000 spectators who attended the various nightly performances in a gentle fold in the hills where the moon helped the searchlights illuminate the memorable show.

A tattoo is a truly British event, usually held in the court of the royal castle at Edinburgh or at England's greatest military training center, Aldershot. The concept is simple: assemble the best

military bands, drill units, and drum and bugle corps. Find a beautiful parade ground outside some ancient castle walls, light it superbly with searchlights. Then have all the military units in full dress uniforms enter with bands playing some blood-racing march and drill back and forth under the lights in faultless precision and intricate patterns.

Actually it takes weeks of rehearsals and careful planning by an expert to bring off properly—and the Bermuda Tattoo came off with breath-taking splendor and excitement. This was because one of Bermuda's leading citizens, S. S. Toddings, O. B. E., a member of Parliament and local newspaper publisher, arranged for the world's leading tattoo expert, Brigadier A. G. L. Maclean, C. B. E., to come to the island to organize it.

It can be reported that there wasn't a dry American eye under the Bermuda moon when the U.S. Marine band and drill team, bearing all the battle honors and streamers which the Corps has won since its founding in 1775, came parading in full dress, ramrod stiff, through the great castle gate, to the strains of "Semper Fidelis." The searchlights played back and forth over them as they came down the parade ground, and even as seasoned a world traveler as R. B. Hemphill, president of The American Society of Travel Agents, tugged with emotion at the most famous beard in the travel industry.

Mr. Hemphill's beard, I presume.

—JEROME BEATTY, JR.

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The Saturday Review
JUNE 29, 1957

# THE CATTY SCHOOL OF WRITING

By ERNEST EARNEST

MOST modern problems seem to end up as either semantic or psychosomatic. Very possibly the literary discussion which follows may be psychosomatic. After all, it was a pioneer in psychosomatic medicine, Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, who discussed ailurophobia as far back as 1905. He reported cases of people who became extremely uncomfortable when a cat entered a room, even though they were unconscious of its presence.

Perhaps it is a similar ailurophobia which accounts for the notorious unwillingness of educated American men to read modern fiction. Here at once we are faced with the problem of semantics. Most people feel that they are communicating clearly when they refer to "a catty remark," but they might find it difficult to define the statement. Certainly the description of a woman as a cat has, unlike such a phrase as *free enterprise*, the advantage of what the semanticists call a referent. A political speaker may believe as firmly in free enterprise as a medieval poet believed in a unicorn, but it would be equally difficult to discover an example. But all of us could point to some specific person as a cat or a specific remark as catty.

I maintain that there is a considerable body of modern writing which is catty, and I shall point to examples of it. Someone else might say merely that it is *The New Yorker* style, but that would be a catty remark. This suggests that the catty style is sophisticated, or at least tries to be. Often it is, but it is the sophistication of the cocktail party, not of a Henry James or a Wright Morris. It is the sophisticated observation of surfaces rather than an exploration of psychological subtlety. One of the basic conventions is to show—or rather show up—the characters in a social situation where they appear to a disadvantage. Let us take an example from a modern novel. That in itself is not a catty remark except to the person who regards the adjective *modern* as a derogatory term. If I wanted to be catty, I would say, "Except to those Philadelphians who regard the adjective *modern* as connoting something from New York or Hollywood."

Here is Professor Wiggam who

> wore a single eyeglass and a velveteen smoking jacket, a pipe rather ostentatiously apparent in one pocket. He was dressed in character identifiable at once as what he was—the beloved "Puffer" authority on English literature of the nineteenth century, who had sublimated fairly well his repressed desire to be an actor

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by the establishment of his reputation as a raconteur.

Immediately following him is Harry Kent "delegate at large from Harvard's English Department to preach the gospel of modern poetry (some of it his own) to the Philistines . . ." "Some of it his own" is the quintessence of the catty style, but both descriptions are in the best traditions of that style. I could have been really *nasty and said "the best Helen Howe* tradition of the catty style."

As a matter of fact, Helen Howe is quite specific about the feline quality of her characters. An English movie star—at a cocktail party, of course—gets out her claws:

> "Darling old Nat" purred Enid. "Over here you probably don't realize what a national institution she is. She's been in simply film after film but has become what we call in England a hack. It's natural for her, poor pet, to feel that her name is a big one. And, quite frankly, darling, she doesn't seem to understand how much bigger my name is than hers."

Here of course the author is being catty about another feline.

Jane Austen often used this method of letting unpleasant women characterize themselves. (It would be catty to say, "Jane Austen, an author much admired by college professors, often reveals the same feminine sharpness.") For instance, Mrs. Elton, the vicar's bride tells Emma

> I absolutely cannot do without music; it is a necessary of life to me; and having always been used to a very musical society, both at Maple Grove and in Bath, it would have been a most serious sacrifice. I honestly said as much to Mr. E when he was speaking of my future home, and expressing his fears lest the retirement of it should be disagreeable; and the inferiority of the house too—knowing what I had been accustomed to—of course he was not wholly without apprehension. When he was speaking of it in that way, I honestly said that *the world* I could give up—parties, balls, plays—for I have no fear of retirement. Blessed with so many resources within myself, the world was not necessary to *me*. I could do very well without it. To those with no resources it was a different thing; but my resources made me quite independent. And as to the smaller-sized rooms than I had been used to, I really could not give it a thought. I hoped I was perfectly equal to any sacrifice of that description. Certainly, I had been accustomed to every luxury at Maple Grove; but I did assure him that two carriages were not necessary to my happiness, nor were spacious apartments. "But," said I, "to be quite honest, I do not think I can live without something of a musical society. I condition for nothing else; but without music, life would be a blank to me."

The difference is that Jane Austen presents an unpleasant woman in a context of essentially likeable human beings. For instance, the hypochrondria of Emma's father, Mr. Woodhouse, is satirized, but Mr. Woodhouse is allowed to remain a human being. And when Emma herself gives an amusing catty take-off on Miss Gates, Mrs. Weston says, "For shame, Emma! Do not mimic her. You divert me against my conscience." Before the novel has ended Emma has repented of her own cruelty and egotism. But the modern catty novelist takes a sadistic delight in cutting everyone down to her own size. Like Iris March in the old Michael Arlen novel, characters are never spared anything. When Helen Howe's Kay De Fronzo comes into a room:

> Her entrance hit the assemblage with as much impact as though a wildcat had been let out of a cage. Among her fellow females there was an instinctive ruffling of the fur and flexing of the claws; the tomcats lashed their tails, circling closer to the new arrival as they glared at one another.

There are no Mrs. Westons or Mr. Knightleys in Helen Howe's gallery. Instead there is a "huge Russian woman with sideburns, said by Nini to sing gypsy songs. Dexter, making ineffectual jabs of conversation in her direction, got no more response from her than he might from a hippopotamus in the zoo at feeding time." In view of these zoological preoccupations one may question Marquand's blurb about "Helen Howe's unerring eye for people."

There are of course more subtle ways of being catty. A neat trick is the guilt-by-association sort of thing. The victim is trapped in some unfortunate social setting, in the wrong kind of room, or eating from the wrong kind of china. As a last resort he can be given a cold. Nothing delights the catty writer so much as a character's runny nose.

Here is Mary McCarthy's picture of a college professor showing to a colleague a letter terminating his contract:

> Silently he took the letter from his breast pocket and handed it across the desk. While she unfolded it, he dropped into the side chair still warm from the student's bottom, and affected to study his fingernails while he watched her beneath his granulated lashes.

Granted that Henry Mulcahy is not an admirable person, but the means by which the novelist makes him unpleasant are by references to a student's bottom and the man's granulated eyelids.

The real possibilities of this trick are demonstrated when Miss McCarthy engages in literary discussion:

> Professor Mulcahy had gladly accepted an identification with Joyce, the obscure language teacher in Trieste; with the tubercular Kafka in Prague, browbeaten by an authoritarian father; with the sickly *tisane*-drenched Proust; with Marx, even, and his carbuncles; with Socrates and his hemlock . . . the unwholesome whiteness of his long, pear-shaped body, the droop of his trousers, his children's runny noses and damp bottoms, his wife's woman's complaint, the sand sprinkling the lashes of his nearsighted, glaucus eyes, which had made him the butt of students, were not antipathetic to him but on the contrary lovable, as a manifestation of ethical difference, like the bleeding of holy pictures of his childhood, the yellow palms for Palm Sunday, the vessel of holy water blessed by the Pope.

Well that pretty much takes care of Joyce, Kafka, Proust, Marx, Socrates, Palm Sunday, and the Pope—not to speak of Professor Mulcahy, his children's colds, damp diapers, and his wife, reduced to a character in a Lydia Pinkham ad.

ANOTHER convention is that characters must invariably do and say unpleasant things. Nancy Hale has a character say in a *New Yorker* story: "The falseness of those people!" Theodosia stormed, "It's we who are simple and basic and good." In the livelier part of that magazine one might find that headed, "Remarks we doubt ever got stormed." But what can one expect of a character named Theodosia? In keeping with falseness-of-people theme Theodosia and her husband develop imaginary pains at the thought of giving a cocktail party. "My head aches," she added "as if it were a tooth. I'm incapable of thinking. Throb, throb . . ."—another remark more likely in a catty story than in life. Well, sure enough, in the course of the party little Phoebe develops a real pain and is sent to the hospital to have her appendix out.

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(Under the rigid conventions of the catty school, kids may sometimes be human). But in the end the people-are-nasty convention triumphs. When the kid comes out of ether, screaming and of course alone, a nurse comes in:

"Now look here young lady—" the nurse began with the approved brisk callousness. For this is not a real nurse, but an "approved" or *New Yorker* nurse. Again tradition triumphs—the nurse takes off her shoes —"her feet were tired."

Not only are a character's physical disabilities counted against him, but he can be easily cut down to size by picking up the wrong or especially the too-right fork. We have seen how devastating to Professor Wiggam was a pipe in the breast pocket. Take the sad case of Helen and Bet in Louise Field Cooper's "Anybody But the Bellinghams." At lunch Helen carries her luncheon sherry into the dining room, but Bet "declining to follow her sister's example . . . drank her glass then and there, and set it firmly down beside the nearly empty decanter, on the little table with the green orchid, the white ashtray, and the amber taffeta sample." The practised reader knows at once that any woman setting an empty sherry glass on a little table with a green orchid, a white ashtray, and an amber taffeta sample is—well, just that sort of woman. Here again the surface is confused with a psyche.

Even a group of important poets can be put in their place by this built-by-association-with-the-trivial technique. Mary McCarthy, who once wrote a serious story about douches and pessaries for the *Partisan Review,* handles poets in this way:

> Meanwhile, over fried sausages and red apple rings, fried potatoes, fried chicken, fried onions, in the coffee shop of the old hotel, the poets who were still on schedule were relenting somewhat toward the conference. The old mountain town was very picturesque.

After all, even T. S. Eliot confronted by fried sausages and red apple rings might look a bit like Eddie Guest.

Like P. T. Barnum the catty writer never gives a sucker (i.e. character) a break. Thus, in Helen Howe's "The Success" we meet Yoseph, a musician. "Highly paid and widely recognized he could afford to be socially congenial. But the professors, underpaid and known only to the *cognoscenti,* were prickly to cope with." Well, that takes care of professors and any musician who happens to be socially congenial—he must be making a lot of money.

The catty writer is especially fond of large categories like professors—who in these days of mounting college enrolments and in *The New Yorker* school of writers have multiplied like rabbits. Individuals have a disconcerting habit of showing human traits, but this literary problem disappears when one talks about suburbanites, doctors, or members of the DAR. Thus, Mary McCarthy can easily say:

> Like many teachers of English he was not able to think very clearly and responded like a conditioned watch-dog to certain sets of words which he found vaguely inimical . . .

(It is of course not cricket to think of other people besides English teachers to whom this might apply.)

Or, "Like most people of literary sensibility, he had been unprepared, when it came down to it, for the obvious . . ."

English teachers and people of literary sensibility can take comfort in the knowledge that other people are also fallible.

> Dr. Miller, like many historians, had certain regressive tendencies arising from the nature of his subject, which called for a tolerance of the past, in the same way that some occupations, like sandhogging, give rise to their own occupational diseases.

Thus, lest any reader give a kindly glance toward Dr. Miller or to a tolerance of the past, he is reminded of sandhogs and occupational diseases. When Emerson heard that Margaret Fuller said that she accepted the universe, he remarked "Gad, she'd better." One suspects that a writer of the catty school would have said "Gad, she'd better not." Look at what happened to Dr. Miller, who was a little tolerant of what had happened.

All of us have our foibles, our moments of vanity. It is these less inspired moments which are the staple of the catty writer's characterizations. There is Randall Jarrell's portrait of a college president. (Not all the catty writers are women.)

> The President sat in the front row, his leg over the arm of his seat, his good profile turned toward the audience.

Or there is Mary McCarthy's college professor:

> John hugged his knees. His olive student-face assumed a didactic mien.

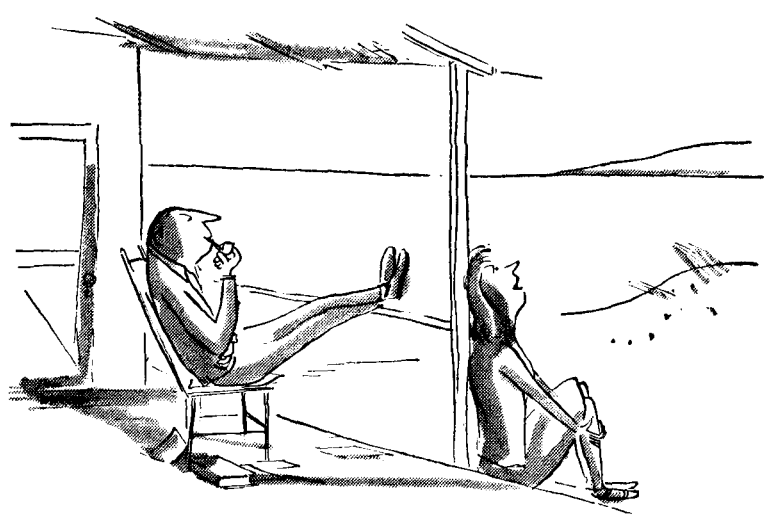
For although John is an essentially nice guy, the remark he is about to make is already discounted by his student face and his didactic expression.

Jean Stafford uses even more drastic means to discount a character's basic decency. Captain Sandstrom remarks, "We haven't got enough of our own coons, we have to take care of this stray jigaboo from Liberia, what?" Then, lest the reader share the emotions of the girl he is talking to, she is cut down to size:

> He appealed to Mrs. Fairweather, a high principled girl in her middle twenties, who had fanatically learned tolerance in college, and who now rose to his bait, as she could always be counted on to do, and all but screamed her protest at his use of the words "nigger" and "coon" and "jigaboo."

The Victorian phrase sets the tone:

(*Continued on page* 27)



**"What could be nicer? The sand, the sea, and reasonably good reviews."**

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**FICTION**

—Drawing by Jean Cocteau.

# The Lost Young

***"The Holy Terrors," by Jean Cocteau*** *(New Directions. 193 pp. $3), is a new translation by Rosamond Lehman of a novel, written in the Twenties, about two extraordinary children who create a world of their own.*

By Frances Keene

THE "awkward age" is a phrase we all remember, the near-Jamesian tag applied to adolescence in pre-1914 novels and stories. It characterized the role then accorded most adolescents in their day-to-day behavior, too. This age came one step after the children-should-be-seen-and-not-heard stage; perhaps, as much as anything, it implied that the earlier dictum could no longer be made to stick.

But the First World War was to change all that. Overnight—or so it seemed—the adolescent became a symbol. In a world of violently shifted values, he alone could straddle two worlds, demanding and getting indulgence of both. His youth, his vulnerability, his very defiance bespoke protection, forgiveness-before-the-offense, cautious encouragement of rebellion—a rebellion the nature of which no one, not even the protagonist, could quite define.

On the heels of this deluge came Jean Cocteau's first great success, "Les enfants terribles," a novel in which brother and sister, Paul and Elisabeth, construct a life along lines of their own complex devising, lines nonetheless rigorous for being quite apart from (and not consciously against) those governing the rest of society. This extraordinary pair of orphans devise a dreamlike world in which there is no place for outsiders. The tragedy turns upon a stranger's intrusion into their solitary existence causing jealousy and pain and eventually Paul's attempt at suicide to free himself forever from the dominance of his sister. Published in France in 1929, the tale of self-destructive violence and incestuous infatuation appealed at once to a myth-hungry readership. The next year the late Samuel Putnam, a notable translator, put it into English for Harcourt, Brace. In Putnam's translation the book cut a wide swath, too.

But these two versions did not exhaust the appeal of the material. Those who remember Cocteau's trail-blazing film, "Le sang d'un poète," know how he later adapted themes from "Les enfants" for the screen, themes the response to which had been far more uncritical hence total than he had anticipated or wanted. Cocteau had written in his journal about Paul and Elisabeth,

> Those who read [the book] and read about themselves in it became, for the reason they believed they were living my ink, the victims of a resemblance they owed it to themselves to sustain. An artificially created disorder came from this, and the conscious practice of a state of affairs which has only the subconscious as an excuse.

Cocteau's film, too, stunned, captivated, but the audience was smaller because of the language barrier and the experimental cachet that clung to the film. Still, its place was soon assured as a milestone in the medium —an indication that the themes themselves were not soon played-out.

Now, almost thirty years after publication, Cocteau's *enfants* are being reissued in a sensitive, new translation by Rosamond Lehmann, herself the author, among many honest and searching books, of an early novel of adolescence, "Dusty Answer," which played its decisive role at the same time as Cocteau's. "The Holy Terrors" is not a bit of buried treasure refurbished to make a bright reentry as a sort of animated curio. It is no more reminiscent of the Twenties to today's young readers than are the juke-box tunes they listen to avidly and hum to each other, tunes which had their first hearing well before these listeners were dreamed of.

Cocteau's new audience includes a bewildered, sullen group of post-existentialist youngsters with problems quite distinct from those of the Twenties. Yet so real was the author's awareness that the adolescent has never found moorings that the book's pull is as strong as ever. In a period when the press flames with acts of violence by those still technically children, Dargelos and his wounding snowball, his gift of poison, rings an evocative bell. This world of fast cars, noises called up from outer space, meet-the-dare or be destroyed, above all keep-separate from the monstrous norm, pictures the very pace of today's lost young.

True, "Les enfants" gave many adolescents in the Twenties and Thirties a terrifying mirror to play with. In the Fifties, "The Holy Terrors" reflects desperation and humorless passion to a newly restless, tormented young world.

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# Uprooted Men

***"The Awakened," by Zoe Oldenbourg*** *(translated by Edward Hyams. Pantheon. 493 pp. $4.95), is about the tribulations, loves, and in some cases triumphs of a group of Russian and German refugees living in Paris before World War II.*

By Ben Ray Redman

PAUL VALÉRY, in one of his most perspicacious moments, has told us that the social structure, which "seems as natural as nature," is actually "only held together by magic. Is it not, in reality," he asks, "an edifice built of spells, this system which is based on writings, on words obeyed, on promises kept, on effectual images, on observed habits and conventions—all of which are pure fiction?"

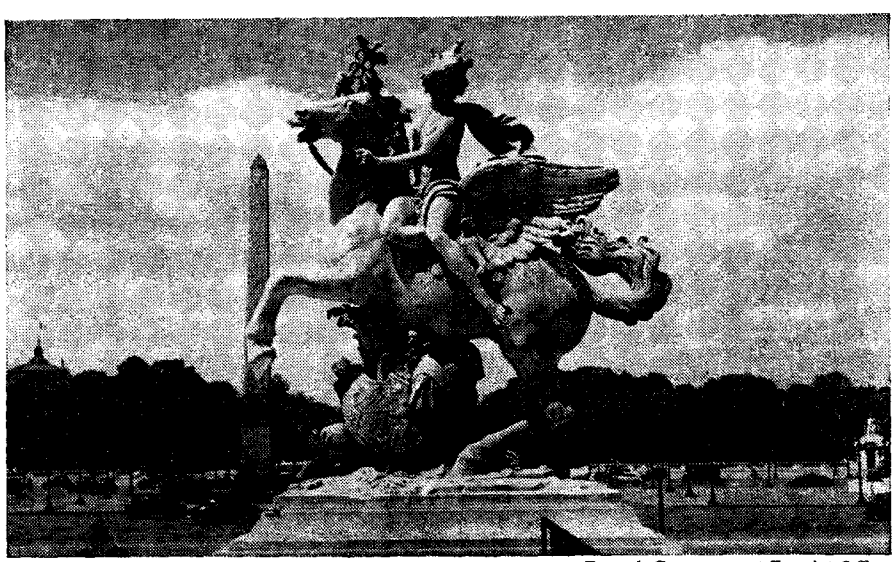
An affirmative answer to this rhetorical question would certainly be given by any one of the principal characters of Zoe Oldenbourg's new novel "The Awakened," for they have been fated to exist without benefit of the sustaining, order-creating magic of which Valéry speaks. Refugees from Stalin's Russia and from Hitler's Germany, living in Paris during the years just prior to the Second World War, they find themselves on shifting sands. They are on their own. As one of them, a young Russian who has never known Russia, puts it:

> You see, so long as life continues normally, you can say to yourself: This is the traditional way and has been for centuries; it is a great concept—the land of one's fathers. But when, like us, you're awakened from life, it's like being wild beasts in a cage, crowded one against the other—ugly, mortally ugly, a teeming animal life justified by—nothing.

André Lanskoi is in one of his blacker moods when he says this. Zoe Oldenbourg's uprooted, "awakened" characters do not permit themselves to be reduced to the level of beasts. They retain their human dignity, even nobility, in the most degrading, most oppressive circumstances. Leopold Lindberg, a German Jewish-Catholic philologist of international renown, the father of Stephanie, beloved of Ely Lanskoi, is the strongest and the proudest of them all; but none of them need be ashamed of his response to the trials he has to meet.

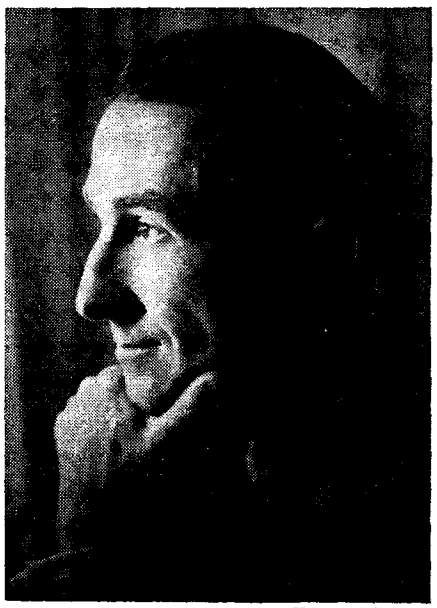
The heart of the novel is the love story of Ely and Stephanie. It is a story of ecstasy and torture, one of the most moving, most remarkable stories of love that I have read; a story of innocent, romantic, youthful love that matures, through agonies, before our eyes. It was a very difficult story to tell, and it has been told supremely well.

The whole of "The Awakened"—characters, scenes, events, dialogue—is worthy of its heart. The relationship of Stephanie and her father is no less beautifully realized, no less poignant, than that of Stephanie and her lover. We are made, by degrees, to feel at home in both the Lanskoi and Lindberg households. There is time for religion as well as philosophy. We can feel Paris around us, feel its very pulse, as we read. In "The Awakened" the author of "The World Is Not Enough" and "The Cornerstone" has turned away from medieval history to draw upon her own experience; and so doing she has won new laurels.



—*French Government Tourist Office.*

**Place de la Concorde—"on shifting sands."**



—*Howard Coster.*

**Gabriel Fielding—"surgical precision."**

# Of Ardor and Fear

***"In the Time of Greenbloom," by Gabriel Fielding*** *(Morrow. 407 pp. $4.75), is the story of young John Blaydon, whose life was changed when he met Victoria Blount and of how he made up for her loss through friendship for a deformed little man and an airy Irish girl.*

By Walter Havighurst

GABRIEL FIELDING is a physician as well as a man of letters and his probing, uncovering novel "In the Time of Greenbloom" shows a kind of surgical skill and precision. The story moves through childhood and youth in a schoolboy's England between the two world wars. Its world is varied and extensive, ranging from the moors of Northumberland to the quadrangles of Oxford, and at the same time it is intensive, being concerned with the painful experience of childhood in a violent and alien adult world.

Young John Blaydon is first shown at a tennis party at a country house. The aliveness in him is quickened when he meets Victoria Blount—generous, fearless, direct Vickie, who will haunt him for the rest of his life. On this day they are two innocent children, wholly alive and curious and quite misunderstood by their elders. Before the day was over the world was changed for John Blaydon, and he could never go back to what it had been.

The novel is an exploration of innocence and ardor, and also of vio-

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lence and fear. When Vickie is murdered in a cave on the North Country moorside, John's loneliness intensifies. At school he is avoided and cut off and he goes on blindly until in Oxford he meets the deformed, electric, liberating Horab Greenbloom—"the little head jutted forward over the narrow shoulders with so great an impatience that it seemed about to disown the remainder of the body and fly off into space upon some urgent purpose of its own."

With Greenbloom, John feels the quickened understanding that came to him from Vickie. Greenbloom is an exotic, often preposterous, character, vividly realized in his dim rich Oxford lodgings, or in the midnight streets of London, or driving the dark roads of Oxfordshire, or in the Paris of the early existentialists. To John he was not preposterous; he was an education and a deliverance. Greenbloom, he felt, was a prophet who dwelt in a time and country of his own beyond the common imagining.

The latter part of the story sags when Greenbloom is off the scene. But he is there at the end, in a strange, exciting scene on the Welsh estate of an addled admiral, a scene less exciting in action than in the clash of minds and temperaments. In an electric atmosphere John finds that his despair is less important and less confiding that he had supposed. His deliverance seems assured when in an airy Irish girl he finds the same quickness and ardor that he had met, years before, in the lost Victoria.

A richness of strangeness like summer lightning plays over Mr. Fielding's novel. It is a disturbing and at times a confusing book, charged with outer and inner violence, but its fitful brilliance lights up some obscure corners of human awareness.

**ESCAPADE IN THE LOWER DEPTHS:** In **"Fowler's End"** (Simon & Schuster, $3.95), Gerald Kersh has scraped together a lineup of characters inhabiting a London substratum in the early years of the Depression. A "character," in the words of one of them, is "something dirty in a picturesque kind o' way"—and Mr. Kersh's roster certainly fills this particular bill.

Ripest of the specimens is one Sam Yudenow, owner of the Fowler's End Pantheon, a silent picture and variety theatre. Yudenow is an entrepreneur in whom ingenuity and cupidity are marvelously fused (he serves his patrons "greenburgers," an expansive mixture of war surplus dehydrated cauliflower and copper sulphate). To Sam's Pantheon comes Daniel Laverock, a public school boy down on his luck, whose craggy features—rearranged by a series of childhood accidents—give him the proper exterior for managing a grind house in the lower depths. In the course of pursuing his duties (bouncer, stagehand, electrician, candy butcher, and tout) Laverock can hardly avoid developing a profound dislike for his inventive employer—which culminates in a diabolical scheme to wound him in the pocketbook.

Mr. Kersh diagrams Laverock's adventures with great relish and with an infectious delight in the complete gaminess of the landscape. Though the author is sometimes so carried away by the sound of cockney that he overindulges in dialectal monologues, "Fowler's End" is a generally entertaining escapade that is fun to read. —MARTIN LEVIN.

**VOODOO GINGERBREAD:** The schizophrenic nature of Alejo Carpentier's tiny piece of voodoo gingerbread called **"The Kingdom of This World"** (translated by Harriet de Onís; Knopf, $3) is infectious.

A reviewer moves easily from a melancholic indifference to this warmed-over Vandercookery of the historic Haitian cruelties to a psychotic admiration for (as Dame Edith Sitwell puts it on the dust-jacket) the "sheer genius" of an author who is "most certainly one of the greatest writers alive at this time."

The publishers, lavishing an hallucinatory radiance on jacket, binding, and format, sometimes show an almost complete withdrawal from the text. Slovenly proofreading has produced such gems as "traitors to his casue" and the picture of a widowed Queen sadly slipping Christophe's amputated finger "in her boson." That this is no boatswain who gets slipped a finger is immediately made apparent when the finger slides downward to tickle the Queen's stomach.

The translator shifts gradually from a turbid, syntactically indefensible prose, to a highly ionized invisibility. Her first fly-blown paragraph has an even half-dozen gaucheries that would have tempted a merciless Ciardi whip to a defenseless schoolgirl's bare back. But when the narrative changes into something more than a warming-pan for a sadist, then Miss de Onís's firescreen is removed, and Carpentier's prose crackles in English, unhindered in its sometimes rocket-like bursts of brilliance and intuition.

The author of this grace note to Haitian history is an Afro-Cuban in spirit, of Franco-Russian parentage, who was born in Havana in 1904, was raised in Europe, and now lives in Caracas. This novella, the author's second venture into fiction, was first published in Mexico in 1949, but has awaited European recognition before making its difficult way into English.

(*Continued on page 26*)

# Your Literary I. Q.

Conducted by John T. Winterich

## MIDDLE NAME, PLEASE?

Many writers give first-name-middle-initial-last-name on their title pages (as Frank R. Stockton). Here are twenty such, with the names for which the missing middle initials stand alphabetized in Column Two. Kindly assign the correct middle names to the correct authors. Confusion rectified on page 27.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Franklin Adams | ( ) | Augustus |
| 2. Paul Angle | ( ) | Cassel |
| 3. Albert Beveridge | ( ) | Dumaux |
| 4. Claude Bowers | ( ) | Elizabeth |
| 5. George Cable | ( ) | Gernade |
| 6. Robert Chambers | ( ) | Good |
| 7. Irvin Cobb | ( ) | Henry |
| 8. Russell Conwell | ( ) | Herman |
| 9. George Doran | ( ) | Jeremiah |
| 10. Lloyd Douglas | ( ) | Johnson |
| 11. Mignon Eberhart | ( ) | Laurence |
| 12. Walter Edmonds | ( ) | Leopold |
| 13. Morris Ernst | ( ) | McClelland |
| 14. James Farrell | ( ) | Phillips |
| 15. Edgar Goodspeed | ( ) | Pierce |
| 16. George Kaufman | ( ) | Shrewsbury |
| 17. Charles Lindberg | ( ) | Simon |
| 18. John Marquand | ( ) | Thomas |
| 19. Laura Richards | ( ) | Washington |
| 20. William Shirer | ( ) | William |

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USA

# The Threat of Bigness

***"The Politics of Industry," by Walton Hamilton*** *(Knopf. 168 pp. $3.50), is an analysis of the ways in which giantism is affecting American economic life. It is reviewed by Paul H. Douglas, U.S. Senator from Illinois.*

By Paul H. Douglas

WALTON HAMILTON has always been an artist as well as an economist and lawyer. No one has been as successful as he in making plain, matter-of-fact economic situations mysterious, complex, and obscure. A master of stylistic bravura and chiaroscuro, his hand has grown ever more skilful with age. In "The Politics of Industry," a new book of lectures, he demonstrates his full powers. The degree to which pure and atomistic competition has been superseded in modern life by giantism and the legal, political, and financial ways in which it is fostered and effective regulation flouted, are interestingly described. But the style leaves an impression similar to that given by the late Philip Guedalla in his biographies and histories, namely, that one has been fed a heavy diet of clotted cream.

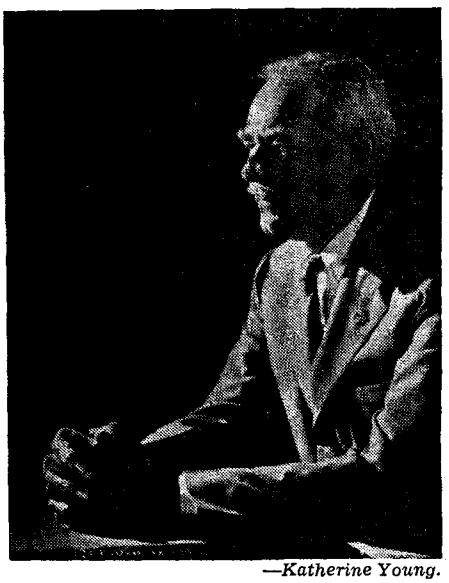
Mr. Hamilton narrates with evident relish the various ways in which big business evades and avoids the Sherman and Clayton acts and has all but jettisoned the Robinson-Patman Act. He is at his best when he describes the process by which the so-called regulatory commissions come to be controlled by those they were supposed to regulate and how the patent system is twisted into a continuing bulwark of monopoly. The law, he maintains, is being more commonly used to restrict entrance into business, trades, and professions than to enforce free and fair competition. Thus he points out that barbers, beauticians, undertakers, and real estate agents commonly can gain entrance into their trades only with the consent of official bodies whose personal interests lie in their exclusion. And lest doctors and lawyers be unduly aroused by these practises, it should be noted that the same end is partially served in their professions by a variety of means. Similarly, by controlling the right to enter business, the state is restricting competition in motor transportation, the sale of fluid milk, and the use of the air and of the air waves. These are healthy reminders of the degree to which in modern life we are approaching the practises of the medieval guilds.

Giantism is the basic domestic issue before the American people. It has already gone far and unless checked it promises to go further. In manufacturing, mining, transportation, retailing, and farming the small units are being forced to give ground and the huge concerns are becoming more gigantic. Unless this process is reversed, the United States in the not distant future will be a land where virtually everybody works for somebody else. And when that happens it will be almost impossible for our country to remain a democracy.

"He who is the bread-giver is the lawmaker," remarked Harrington in his "Oceana" three centuries ago. It was the concentration of landed property which then gave control to the medieval state to the feudal oligarchy. It is the concentration of financial and industrial wealth and power that today threatens a similar fate to our democracy.

Until the last few paragraphs, Mr. Hamilton gives the impression that nothing effective can be done about all this. At the very end, however, he gets down to cases. "As large an area of the industrial system as possible should be left to competition." Mergers ought to be forbidden except where required by technology. Patents should not be used to foster monopoly, but should be thrown open for public use as soon as possible. The military should distribute its purchases more broadly. Regulation by administrative agencies, at present so weak, needs to be shored up.

These are sensible conclusions. They are the goals for which virtually all the progressively-minded members of Congress are striving. If we follow the route in a more pedestrian manner, we nevertheless share Mr. Hamilton's objectives. Perhaps the purple patches of his prose may entice the general reader into considering issues which our more commonplace exposition has not been able to interest. If so, his book will have more than served its purpose.



—*Katherine Young.*

**Dean Acheson—"no ordinary citizen."**

# ABC's of Legislation

***"A Citizen Looks at Congress," by Dean Acheson*** *(Harper. 124 pp. $2.50), is a study by a former Secretary of State of how the legislative branch of the government operates today. Professor Lindsay Rogers of Columbia University reviews it.*

By Lindsay Rogers

DEAN ACHESON has titled his new book too modestly. Every page of "A Citizen Looks at Congress" makes it clear that no ordinary citizen is doing the looking. It is a man of vast experience who is contemplating the popularly elected branch of the legislature and the upper house, which Gladstone called "the most remarkable of all the inventions of modern politics, the Senate of the United States." Readers who have not forgotten recent history will remember that Mr. Acheson was Assistant Secretary of State in 1941, Under Secretary of State from 1945 to 1947, and Secretary from 1949 to 1953. Before he got to the top of the "greasy pole," his relations with Congress were good. To say that they were less good after President Truman's election is a masterpiece of understatement.

In Mr. Acheson's urbane pages, however, there is hardly a hint of acrimony. Indeed, the closest approach is a discussion of how John Foster Dulles "supplied the laying on of hands" in the Republican platform of 1952 and set forth the "mythology" of the fall of China to the

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Communists; of the immoral policy of "containment" which abandoned "countless human beings to despotism and godless terrorism"—all because of the "hordes of loafers, incompetents, and unnecessary employees who clutter the administration of our foreign affairs." At the moment Mr. Dulles is working hard to keep Congress from slashing the State Department appropriation by forty million dollars.

Mr. Acheson takes his initial views of Congress through frequent quotations from Woodrow Wilson's "classic" book "Congressional Government." He refines Wilson's well-known analysis of Congressional government as committee government and points out how Wilson's low view of the prestige of the Presidency which he set forth in 1884, proved to be wrong when Grover Cleveland and Theodore Roosevelt had "burnished the power of the Presidential office to a brilliant lustre," and when Woodrow Wilson himself was the most powerful President that the country had hitherto had. Among his successors Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman were as strong as Wilson, and nowadays the $64,000 question in Washington always is: "What is the state of legislative-executive relations?"

Mr. Acheson calculates that while he was Secretary of State he spent one-sixth of his time dealing with Congressional committees—far more than would have been necessary if committees had not competed with each other for the limelight and if their members had bothered to do their homework. He is not too optimistic on an improvement of executive-legislative relations in the field of foreign affairs. "Can the Congress discipline itself to do its own job and not try to do the Executive's job?" he asks, and gives a pessimistic reply: "Those who know it best will have their doubts. The virus of busyness has bitten deep. Impulses born of parochial interests at stake, of personal ambition, of partisan maneuver, all make for interference with administration and the attempt to control it. They are hard to resist in favor of more plain and unspectacular courses. But there have always been men in the Congress who have made this harder choice."

If Mr. Acheson had been writing a partisan tract, he could have given many examples of his encounters with "personal ambition" and "partisan maneuver." Mr. Acheson contents himself with bestowing accolades on the late Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg and the present Speaker of the House of Representatives, Sam Rayburn.

—Jacket illustration from "The American Oasis."
"An example of enlightenment and improvement."

# The Land : Its Ruin and Rescue

***"The American Oasis," by Edward Higbee*** *(Knopf. 262 pp. $5), is a study of the damage that has been wrought to great expanses of our soil and of efforts that could and are being made to repair it. Our reviewer, Russell Lord, is the author of "Behold Our Land" and other books on land use.*

By Russell Lord

SINCE the Mid-Thirties, when Paul Sears's "Deserts on the March" was published, soon followed by "To Hold This Soil," a bulletin of the Soil Conservation Service, it would be hard to say how many books on agricultural ruination and repair have been aimed at the general public. On my shelves alone I have upwards of four hundred. Yet it seems to me that Edward Higbee's "The American Oasis" is in a number of ways the best to date.

Mr. Higbee advances the concept of this country as a living landscape viewed as an interrelated whole, a vital body, out of whack at the ground-line and under indifferent repair. With an air of quiet authority and the impersonal approach of a good physician, he examines the body of our country. He shows that what ails any one part of it threatens the well-being of the whole structure, and what heals and strengthens soil carries through by way of sounder water management to the economic health and betterment of all; and he carries his study through from soil and water sources to the final crop of any land, the nature, intelligence, and character of its people.

Viewing America as "an oasis of plenty in what is largely a hungry world," the opening chapters sketch the immense diversity of our continental holdings, and the various dictates of climate. Over all this land, for ten thousand years or more, the Indians, farming lightly if at all, kept the natural resources pretty well intact. "Man was not then the biological dominant that he is today. His skill lay in adaptation to his environment rather than in drastic modification of it."

Drastic modification started when, some 250 years ago, the invading whites, adopting Indian crops such as corn and tobacco, but not adopting Indian methods which generally preserved cover, pushed west and south with axe and plow, hacking and burning. They fitted some European crops and methods, too, into a hybrid, misfit agriculture that generally ignored such enlightened European practices as crop rotation, the admixture and cultivation of clovers and grasses, and a proper balance between field crops and livestock.

The tragic consequences of all this have often been sketched, and Higbee does not dwell upon them unduly; he is more concerned with present practices of restitution and repair. But he does succeed most vividly in portraying the kaleidoscopic rapidity of the continuing transformation of the American landscape for good or ill. Machines are at once the villain and the hero of the story. They can tear soil down, and have done so on this soil at a rate beyond precedent in history; but also, as we have just begun to discover and demonstrate, machines can build soil.

Having travelled more than 25,000 miles to view current transformations

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in crops and methods, and to talk with the most successful operators under present conditions, Higbee comes up with the acute observation that, generally speaking, the traditional "garden spots" of American agriculture are the worst farmed and the scene of the greatest continuing waste and deterioration. There was some indication of this, as I recall, in a survey of "distressed" land made during the 1930s by insurance companies that had come into possession of great stretches of the Corn Belt by default. The famed black soils of that area were found to be no more fruitful, and often less so, than the lighter brownish soils. The black could be taken too much for granted, and mined; the brown had to be more carefully tended and cropped.

With ill-concealed impatience, Higbee shows that while cornland can now be held in place and built up in humus content if it is mulched with the machine-shredded cornstalks, fortified with adequate applications of liquid nitrogen, few Corn Belt farmers bother to do this. Again, in the dryland Southwest, where technicians worked out contoured strip-crop alterations and machine-made baffles or terraces to reclaim great stretches of the Dust Bowl of the 1930s, another war brought another slapped-in Wheat Rush, and recently another extended drought brought dust storms as of old.

Looking ever for bright spots and "new frontiers" Higbee finds many individual examples of enlightenment and improvement; but when it comes to regions: "If there is a frontier in American agriculture today it is in the reclamation of formerly eroded lands of the Southeast and in the reclamation of marshlands bordering our salt waters."

I think that no one who travels over this country with an eye to the ground can dispute this finding. Cotton is king there no longer; grassland farming and fat cattle and dairying have come in fast; the very rain that used to tear down the weal and health of this part of the land and its people is going into growths now that build up land and man. Supplementary irrigation is coming in to assure an even greater stability in times of uncertain rainfall; and a rapid interurbanization of the population pattern, with a reasonable balance of industrial employ and income, are making what was our sorest spot, economically and socially, into our most hopeful "garden spot" today.

**ANGRY MAN IN THE SOUTH:** Carl Rowan, an able Negro reporter on the *Minneapolis Tribune*, was one of an army of Northern journalists who went South last year to report on the progress and pitfalls of integration. For Rowan, who left his native Tennessee fifteen years ago shortly after he finished high school, it was a trip to sorrow. This he makes clear in the title of the book he has written about it: **"Go South to Sorrow"** (Random House, $3.50). He does not make clear how long he stayed, but it certainly was long enough to confirm his fixed judgments. His is the book of the flaming militant, and the angels are most certainly on his side. He decries the injustices that have refused to yield before the dicta of the Supreme Court. He shudders alike at Southern paternalism that gives the Negro "the easy side of the law" and at Southern brutality as displayed in the cases of Emmett Till and Autherine Lucy. He is revolted at the demagoguery of such politicians as Senator James C. Eastland of Mississippi. He is moved by the quiet courage of the Reverend Martin Luther King in the Montgomery bus boycott. Rowan's reporting is frequently high-quality stuff which makes it easy to see how he has compiled an enviable record of journalism awards.

But too often bitterness and anger force even the most sympathetic reader to discount much of what he has to say. He succumbs to the temptation to oversimplify; he praises his heroes unqualifiedly; he damns his villains unmercifully. Because he feels that it is impossible for such a creature as a "moderate" to exist, the Southern moderate bears the brunt of Rowan's anger. Yet the truth is that the moderate not only exists in the South, but must continue to exist as a vital force in gaining Southern acceptance of the court's decision.

"Go South to Sorrow" is not so much a report on the South today as it is a blind confirmation of noble prejudices. It adds little to the cause of justice or of journalism.

—MARK ETHRIDGE, JR.

# I Chop Down Trees

By Donald Hall

I CHOP down trees with a lawn mower.
Yes, they are small,
but they are trees, with leaves
shaped maple, oak, and birch.
"O woodsman," cries a voice in me,
"spare that tree!
For I who am unborn
wish shade from the sun,
books made of pulp, a branch
for swinging from, and houses,
and driftwood lamps,
and model airplanes,
and bookcases."
"Yes, yes, yes,"
I answer, impatient and elderly,
"but what about gallows
on which to hang children
who steal cars
or speak when they are not spoken to?
What about slivers?
What about books of verse
by young men
who are preparing for their general examinations?
What about party cards
of thirty-seventh degree anarchists?
What about trees hit by lightning
which fall upon wires
and set fires?
You never can tell about trees."
What I do not say
is that I cut them
entirely without reflection
because they are in the way
of me and my terrible lawn mower.

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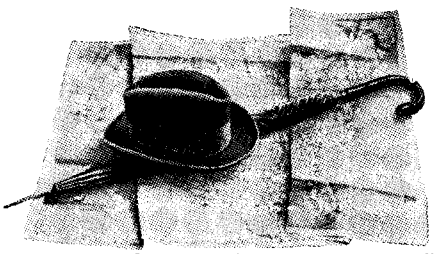
# Six Books to Make You Smile

**THE GOLFER'S LOT:** When the editors of *Sports Illustrated* decided to poke fun at that superbly surburban institution, The Country Club, it was scarcely surprising that they should choose John P. Marquand as their needle. What is surprising—and disappointing—however, is that the author of such satirical gems as "The Late George Apley" and "H. M. Pullam Esq." should, in tackling so pregnant a plum, have resorted to the general level of farce. For that is precisely what these magazine pieces, which have now been collected into a book called **"Life at Happy Knoll"** (Little Brown, $3.75), have turned out to be.

This is not to say that most country clubs do not have their farcical aspects. Like Mr. Marquand's Happy Knoll, they do. Take, for example, the caddie situation where, now that teen-age boys are able to make three times as much money mowing lawns as they did carrying golf clubs, the demand has come to exceed the supply. Obviously, from the point of view of the golfer, something has to be done to lure these juveniles back to the links. The Happy Knoll remedy, as suggested by a member of its Board of Governors, is "a Revolving Incentive Fund for Deserving Caddies" wherein each boy is graded as deserving or not by the member who hires him according to an involved point system which also includes demerits for such virtually unpardonable offenses as

*—Drawing by John Morris from "Life at Happy Knoll."*



*—From the jacket of "Potter on America."*

sniffling, coughing, or laughing on the golf course as well as taking practice swings with an employer's clubs.

So far, so good. But when Mr. Marquand discusses the caddie problem at length, as he does, or similarly, when he devotes whole chapters to describing such hackneyed though characteristic country club fixtures as the lady golfer who demands locker facilities equal to those of the men, the hyper-thyroid member of the Board of Governors who suggests conducting a Gallup poll to see how short the women's shorts should be, the old retainer who tends the bar and pours ginger ale into the old fashioneds, or, the golf professional who keeps saying that golf is a psychological game and proceeds to tell about a "French doctor called M. Cooey" (Marquand for Coué), the results can be pretty tiresome.

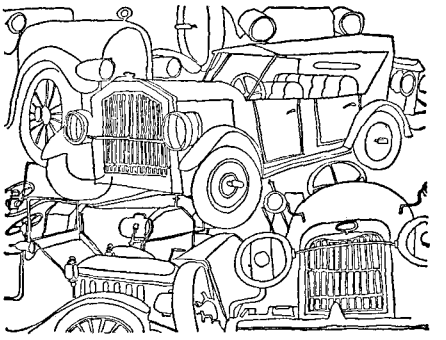
Basic absurdities, unfortunately, cannot sustain their humor for any length of time without some intervening subtlety—which is another way of saying that some of us, at any rate, need relief from constant comic relief. Reading Mr. Marquand's book is not unlike sitting through five acts of a Shakespearean play with the Drunken Porter as the only character.

—E. P. MONROE.

**THE TRAVELING LECTURER'S LOT:** Stephen Potter is known to Womrath's whimsy-fringe as the author of three small volumes: "Gamesmanship," "Lifemanship," and "One-Upmanship." It appears that the admiral might better have stuck with his fleet. Mr. Potter decided (or Bennett Cerf, his publisher, to whom he gives much thanks, decided) that in his new book **"Potter on America"** (Random House, $3), "America" would be better discussed in a fairly straightforward, all-but-humorless manner, and both "America" and the readers lose thereby. "America" appears here in quotes because, despite the bravura of the book's title, the United States is a bit more than 208 small pages can comfortably encompass.

The tendency of literate Americans to deride the efforts of visiting foreigners to limn the colonies in a few quick strokes is here given validity. Mr. Potter says, for example, of New York City's Harlem: "The Negro Harlem is just like 'Street Scene' . . . brownstone houses and they sit on steps in the sun." And nothing more. He noticed segregation in the lavatories of a Southern airport, but didn't notice the extraordinary lack of it in New York City's Birdland. In New Orleans he spent "a few hours in the French Quarter . . . window shopping." The rest of his time there (almost two full days) was spent listening to Dixieland bands. Since New Orleans is one of perhaps the eight American cities possessed of unique and noticeable personalities, it seems short shrift—particularly when Mr. P. devotes eight pages to how he spent his time on the ship coming over.

Mr. P. has a habit of using initials instead of people, and in one instance the result, which up to then had been to give the text a sort of old-world quaint-coziness, is hilarious: "Then I saw T. getting up. T. was Hugh Troy." Often he lunches with W. or L., once compares an American artist with R—— Z——. These United States become "U.S." in a jarring kind of neologism, thus: "Lunch at Weybright's. Weybright is the Allen Lane of U.S." Here, of course, Weybright might have been better off as W.



*—Drawing by James J. Spanfeller from "Where did you go?"*

It isn't pleasant to carp and perhaps it's unbecoming to snipe, but the book is a collection of carpable, snipe-able near abstractions, and when the author pauses to be factual or to take a stand, the results are often (gently, now) well, awkward: "Cronkite helped me to understand something of the delicate balance of the game [baseball], of the fine adjustments of relative distances between bases, boundaries, and fieldsmen, which gives this game its subtlety." Sic, sic, and sic.

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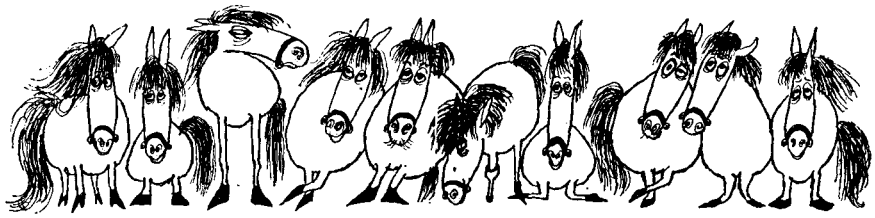
Stephen Potter, by his own account, arrived in New York on the evening of a March 15. By March 31 of that same year, he had spent one or two days in each of the following: New York, Washington, Augusta, Ga., West Palm Beach, Fla., New Orleans, and back to New York. Some of this time was spent in traveling, no?

America, to an Englishman, apparently includes Canada, and a number of pages are devoted to a train trip across the bottom of that respected dominion. This takes in a lot of additional territory but is a disappointment to a U.S. resident who had expected to read about his own land. Except for New Orleans, the author never visited any of the Louisiana Purchase, any of the land we got from Mexico, none of the Midwest or Far West (except—and this is a complete quote—"Seattle—a less-so Vancouver?", two hours in San Francisco, and there is also an account of a speech he made in Kansas City).

Apologies for shooting fish in a barrel, but, *Madre de Dios!* What a barrel! —HENRY MORGAN.



*—Drawing by Ronald Searle from "Molesworth's Guide to the Atomic Age."*

**THE AMERICAN BOY'S LOT:** "...I was with a bunch of kids a week ago," writes Robert Paul Smith, "ranging in age from ten to fourteen (to forty-one, counting me) and since none of them seemed to know what to do for the next fifteen minutes, I said to them, 'How about a game of mumbly-peg?' And can you believe that not one of these little siblings knew spank-the-baby from Johnny-jump-the-fence?" And not only that, but the tykes who inhabit Mr. Smith's Gesell-haunted preserve can't play a proper game of marbles, or baseball (the Little League is an adult-ridden ersatz); they haven't read Tom Swift, or the *Police Gazette* (in the barber shop), or Sax Rohmer, or Edgar Rice Burroughs. In short, complains Mr. Smith bitterly, today's moppets just don't know how to spend their time.

These observations are contained in a delightful and completely wonderful book of informal reminiscence called **" 'Where did you go?' 'Out.' 'What did you do?' 'Nothing.' "** (Norton, $2.95). When Mr. Smith was a boy, doing "nothing" really meant doing all sorts of wonderful things, like building a tree house, or a hut, or smoking corn silk, or filching the door knobs of a house under construction. But today we live in an era of packaged fun and supervised leisure. Kids raised in a compound where "Spock and Gesell and others of that Ilg are the local deities" do nothing that doesn't come in a kit. (If Mr. Smith's book becomes as popular as it should, some toy manufacturer is sure to put out a "Nothing Kit," complete with a bag of immies, some corn silk, a used copy of "The Boy Allies," and a handbook on how to steal door knobs.) Anyhow, Mr. Smith permits himself a nostalgic look at the dear dead days when kids wore knickerbockers and looked like kids not thugs, when the idea of parental palship was repugnant to parent and child alike, and when doing nothing was filled with magic. There is plenty of magic in "Where did you go?" and if the ways of youth are beyond recall, they are at least captured in this fine little book. —MARTIN LEVIN.

**THE BRITISH SKOOLBOY'S LOT: "Molesworth's Guide to the Atomic Age,"** by Geoffrey Willans and Ronald Searle (Vanguard, $2.75), is apparently an essay at schoolboy satire, a branch of humor beloved of the readers of *Punch*. This is largely guesswork, because Mr. Willans's wit is predominantly of the cracker-barrel variety in which every possible word is misspelled (. . . insofarso as it be i.e. wot i want to sa is that i have jolly well tried to give others the fruits of my xperience at skool and also of the various chizzes . . ." etc., etc.). Anyhow, there are seemingly humorous references to pedagogues ("skoolmasters"), institutional food ("sossages"), girls ("gurls"), holidays ("sumer by the sea"), which may convulse Punchophiles, but which are opaque to this reviewer. The drawings by Ronald Searle are delightful and seem to have more point than the text. —M. L.

**THE MOUNTAIN CLIMBER'S LOT:** The mystique of climbing comes in for a hilarious ribbing in **"The Ascent of Rum Doodle"** (Vanguard, $2.95), in which W. E. Bowman (who describes himself as a "mountain walker") tells how "the world's highest mountain" is conquered by seven intrepid mountaineers and 3,000 native porters. Why 3,000 porters? Well, the equipment for the base camp "had to be carried from the railhead at Chaikhosi, a distance of 500 miles. Five porters would be needed for this. Two porters would be needed to carry the food for these five, and another would carry the food for these two. His food would be carried by a boy. The boy would carry his own food." When one considers that several camps are to be established, and tons of food, gear, champagne (medicinal), scientific equipment transported, the crew of 3,000 porters (and 375 boys) seems barely adequate.

How this hardy band struggles by mistake to the summit of North Doodle (the world's second highest peak), while ninety-two porters slog to the top of Rum Doodle carrying on their backs the base camp and Doctor Prone, the ailing expedition surgeon—is an exploit that belongs in the annals of immortal spoofs. —M. L.

**THE LETTER-WRITER'S LOT:** In one of the missives included in **"Dear Anybody"** (Crown, $2.95), Jules Munshin admits tongue-in-cheekily that on a Martha Raye television show he was "absolutely brilliant, hysterically funny, charming, lovable," etc., etc. If Mr. Munshin is referring to the show which included a wonderful sketch in which he and Miss Raye shared a bungalow built on a railroad right of way (a train roared through their domicile every few minutes), this reviewer certainly concurs. The author was also delightfully funny in "Call Me Mister," "Mrs. McThing," and everything else we have caught him in. As a fabricator of funny letters, though, Mr. Munshin's comic talents are not displayed to their best advantage. "Dear Anybody" is too haphazard and pointless to be very amusing. Unless, that is, Mr. Munshin would contrive to read it aloud to each customer. That would be quite a package. —M. L.

*—Drawing by Doug Anderson from "Dear Anybody."*

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# The Prime Minister's Lady

***"Mrs. Gladstone: The Portrait of a Marriage," by Georgianna Battiscombe*** *(Houghton Mifflin. 251 pp. $5), is the story of the wife of the great Victorian Prime Minister. Our reviewer, Louise Hall Tharp, is the author of several biographies of great men's consorts, the most recent of which is "Three Saints and a Sinner."*

By Louise Hall Tharp

"THROUGH his wife's eyes, we can see Gladstone as a person, not as a personage," according to Georgina Battiscombe in her foreword to "Mrs. Gladstone: The Portrait of a Marriage." This is the pious hope of most biographers of a woman married to a celebrity. When the famous husband is such a sternly self-righteous Victorian that even "the dear Queen" herself could hardly stand him, the biographer has a stiff assignment. Mrs. Battiscombe makes good her foreword to a remarkable degree. Fortunately, there was never any question about the magnetism of Catherine Glynne Gladstone. She was always a person, even a personality but she was never in much danger of becoming a personage.

It is inevitable that Mrs. Battiscombe should mention Jane Austen, if only to bring out the point that Catherine Glynne was twenty-six when she met Gladstone, or "only a year younger than Anne Elliott whom Jane Austen relegated to the ranks of the faded and middle-aged . . ." From beginning to end, "Mrs. Gladstone: The Portrait of a Marriage" is a Jane Austen novel in real life. Hawarden castle is a picturesque ruin, Hawarden house is newly castellated; Lady Glynne, the daughters, and the sons are all of them the stuff out of which an Austen novel is made. Will Stephen, the oldest son, turn out to be a good Lord of the Manor? Of course not. He prefers "botany, conchology, and optics"; he actually hates to ride to hounds. And will daughter Catherine be endowed with all the capabilities, including horsemanship, that the son and heir should possess? Indeed she will. The inevitability of the plot, with truth seeming to masquerade as fiction, makes "Mrs. Gladstone" an enchanting period piece. When Gladstone becomes a Liberal and his wife a promoter of orphanages and homes for the aged rather than a Lady Bountiful with a basket of food for the poor—the piece has evolved from period Victorian to *fin-de-siecle*.

—*From the book.*

Catherine Gladstone—"always twinkled."

A beautiful heroine, although not as essential to the biographer as to the novelist, is nonetheless welcome. Catherine Glynne Gladstone was beautiful even in marble. Like most well-to-do young women of her era she had her portrait bust done in Rome. A water-color sketch made ten years later gives much the same impression; that of very British elegance. Better still is a word-of-mouth description which is borne out in excerpts from her letters: "a relative, asked for recollections of her, replied immediately, 'She always twinkled'." Perhaps the most attractive attribute of Catherine Glynne Gladstone was her sense of humor. She got herself laughed at because of her eccentricities, which enliven this lively book, but it is clear that she laughed at herself and that she was the one who enjoyed the joke most of all.

The final scenes in Gladstone's public life are particularly well written. Gladstone is indeed a person. His defeats cause the reader regret and his triumphs are shared. If Catherine's "devotion to her husband" produced "comic tales," they are good ones. "Mrs. Gladstone" is a thoroughly enjoyable book—the kind to keep, to buy for a friend, and to try in vain not to lend.

—*Culver.*

Alfred: Great man in stirring epoch.

# Foe of the Danes

***"Alfred the Great," by Eleanor Shipley Duckett*** *(University of Chicago Press. 220 pp. $3.75) is a biography of one of England's great leaders and cultural figures. Here it is reviewed by Professor Francis P. Magoun, Jr., of Harvard University.*

By Francis P. Magoun, Jr.

IN THE last ten years Eleanor Shipley Duckett has twice presented pictures of the cultural life of the Anglo-Saxons by way of biographies long and short of some of the more distinguished figures of the time (Aldhelm of Malmesbury, Wilfrid of York, the Venerable Bede, St. Boniface, and Alcuin, friend of Charlemagne) all of them known mainly through writings in Latin. In her latest book, "Alfred the Great," she has taken a new tack in writing the biography of a man, the sources of whose life and deeds are mainly in Anglo-Saxon and whose writings are altogether in Anglo-Saxon. This adventure has been most successful and gives the reader a well-rounded picture of Alfred, King of Wessex (871-899) and his times.

It is unfair to expect any biography of a medieval personage even faintly to resemble, say, David Cecil's "Melbourne" for the simple reason that the kind of intimate details generally available for later-day people which

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put flesh and blood on a life story are almost never recorded. One is lucky to have some statement of official acts, literary works (if any), and some rather general characterization, usually uncritically eulogistic, rarely anything more—and Alfred is no exception. There is a contemporary biography, Asser's "Life of Alfred," with some personal details which must, however, be used, as Miss Duckett uses it, with extreme caution. There is also scattered anecdotal material of somewhat later date, but for the rest one must by and large rely on the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" for the King's campaigns against the Danes and on writings closely associated with the King. On this material, like her numerous predecessors (none very recent), she has constructed her biography, with intelligent and unobtrusive use of most recent scholarship.

With some imaginative fill-ins one is given a sympathetic picture of the King's youth, marriage, and early contacts with the raiding Danish Vikings, the latter well-organized and tenacious fighters against an almost fascinatingly badly organized English militia or levy. On his accession to the throne in 871 he faced these invaders almost alone and in the end pretty well controlled them. The crisis came perhaps in the winter of 878, the time of the fine if apocryphal story of the cakes, when the King, truly at bay, was fighting an early Battle of Britain. To win out he had to more or less create an army and a navy and the account of all this makes good reading. But the story of these campaigns is complicated for there was so much scampering about and crisscrossing the country that even with the good end-paper map it is easy to get lost. Between these wars we see Alfred as a ruler and law-giver, a role that might have been more emphasized.

Next to his generalship Alfred's gifts appear most clearly in his activities in the realm of education and his concern for the cultural and spiritual upbuilding of his ravaged kingdom. For his time he was unusual in contemplating some elementary general education of sons of the laity. All this found expression in his sponsoring of translations of standard Latin works. It is hard, as has been commonly observed, not to think that the organization of the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" was not to some extent inspired or encouraged by him, a work without which very little would be known about English history from 731 when Bede leaves off until the Norman Conquest of 1066. "Alfred the Great" may not be everybody's dish but the reader with historical leanings and the patience to use the good maps will close the volume with a rewarding picture of a great man and a stirring epoch in English history.

# ELIZABETH KINGSLEY: 1871-1957

ELIZABETH SEELMAN KINGSLEY died in a New York City nursing home on June 7 at the age of eighty-five. Because of her unique Double-Crostic, and the responsive person that she was, she attracted countless friends for herself and *SR*. Her scholarship seemed almost paradoxical for she was folksy and plump; yet she was so charged with enthusiasm for her myriad interests that words rushed from her lips with the speed of a Savoyard. The literary puzzle she invented twenty-three years ago caught on quickly with *Saturday Review* readers, and before long the country was dotted with devotees, a vocal fraternity ranging from celebrities to shut-ins, with whom she maintained a spirited correspondence.

Mostly they praised her, but sometimes she was chided for resorting to slang or spading up an esoteric word. Retorting typically in the chatty Crostics Club column that for years accompanied her puzzle, she once wrote, "The word *poltophagic*, one of the words against which Dr. Barker protested, would have delighted the soul of the late Professor Emeritus Edward Devalan Perry, of the Greek Department of Columbia University. Often he wrote me of his pleasure in getting at the DC words through their roots—here *poltos*, porridge; *phagein*, to eat. I thought of him as I typed another word new to me into a DC yesterday: *urosome*, from *oura*, tail, meaning the tail region of a fish. Now, can't you feel erudite, when next you eat broiled smelts, to say to your table-partner, "I don't like the urosome of this fish, do you?" During the seventeen years that she did the DCs Mrs. Kingsley, a Wellesley graduate, used more than 50,000 words for her definitions. Yet she had as ready reference in her hotel room only the Oxford Companions to English and American Literature, a set of Shakespeare, Gayley's "Classic Myths," a Bible with Concordance, "some odds and ends rescued from the past," and Webster's New International Dictionary.

Although proficient at them since childhood, Mrs. Kingsley did not care for word games as such. "In 1925," she remarked in a column, "I received ten dollars from *The Chicago Daily News* for a good, stiff [crossword puzzle], and, having proved to my satisfaction that I could make as well as solve one, I put them behind me as futile in those early days."

MRS. KINGSLEY, who from 1900-1914 had taught English at Girls High School in Brooklyn (her birthplace), was seeking instead a puzzle with a goal—one that would stimulate the imagination and heighten an appreciation for belles-lettres. With anagram blocks she concocted one in 1934, then showed a number of samples to the late Amy Loveman, who introduced them in *SR* March 31 of that year. They made it possible for Mrs. Kingsley to support herself without further recourse to the office jobs that had sustained her through eight years of widowhood: fresh DCs for voracious puzzlers were compiled periodically into profitable omnibuses, and others appeared fortnightly in *The New York Times Magazine*.

In 1951, due to illness, she retired, and her editor, Doris Nash Wortman, took over. "She was always kind," says Mrs. Wortman, "always the lady of exquisite taste in everything, and, what was most wonderful of all, she thoroughly believed in and respected her own puzzles. She had built them to serve certain lofty purposes—to foster the love of literature, of poetry, of humor—and to entertain and relax, and repay the solver. In all this she succeeded completely."

—*I. Jonathan*

Elizabeth Kingsley—"exquisite taste."

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# America and the Face of N. Khrushchev

THE CBS team's TV-interview of Nikita Khrushchev has resulted in one very interesting question for debate: Are Americans intelligent enough to face political reality or aren't they? For after this fine piece of journalism had been sent into the archives of space certain critics seemed to suggest that one hour of the smiles and wiles of Mr. Khrushchev may be more than the common sense of Americans can be expected to survive—despite years of anti-Communist exposés and sermons, despite the floods of news and indignation following the Russians' rape of Hungary, despite the hundreds of spokesmen on every level of sophistication who for twenty years have been warning us of the evils of Communism as an ideology and the Soviet Union as a polity.

It seems to be widely assumed that we Americans are so shaky in our grasp of our own convictions, or so moronic, that this representative of a detested government and a detested philosophy, merely by grinning and grunting, will lure us right off our tracks. In a news-conference, President Eisenhower acidly remarked that the interview was the act of a "commercial" company, done for "commercial" advantage; he clearly implied that there was something faintly irresponsible in CBS's decision to go out and get this great scoop. Would he prefer, in defiance of the Constitution's spirit, that reporters submit their projects to the Government for approval? Numerous Congressmen denounced CBS for bringing Communist propaganda into American homes. Do they presume that their constituents are in danger of imminent conversion? Mr. George Meany, of the united labor movement, refused to appear on a rebuttal-program when he found out that film-clips of the original interview would be re-run. Mr. Meany, according to Irving Gitlin, director of public affairs for CBS, "suggested that excerpts simply be read on the program and then be commented on. He did not want to appear [if actual excerpts of the film were used], because he felt [they] would give further broadcast exposure and propaganda advantage to Mr. Khrushchev."

What are these gentlemen afraid of? No doubt Mr. Khrushchev is a clever operator, but isn't it better for Americans to see him for what he is—not just the rough and noisy peasant at vodka parties, not just the super-ruthless collectivizer of the Ukraine, not just a Russian roly-poly—but, from what we can tell, an extremely intelligent and imaginative personality, a man probably deeply certain of his own rightness, a dangerous and formidable antagonist? No doubt Mr. Khrushchev distorted the truth in his interview, if he didn't lie outright. Well, people do lie in the real world, don't they? Are Americans incapable of discerning truth from untruth? Have our own reasoning powers so deteriorated into slogans and platitudes that we cannot confront Khrushchev's lies—look at them, take them part, throw them in his teeth? No doubt Khrushchev's cunning performance on the peace-harp strikes at our most vulnerable wants and needs. But isn't it time for Americans to realize that it is just this peace-music which forms the most effective, if not the only effective, part of the worldwide Soviet propaganda campaign? This is the bit in the Bulganin-Khrushchev act that goes over biggest in Asia and elsewhere, and we may as well see it for what it is.

It is true that television, a young medium, is probably more startling and more moving than older, more familiar means of communication. Certainly no one would dream of disputing the propriety of *The New York Times's* printing a Khrushchev statement in full; this is part of the proper function of a newspaper, and intelligent Americans should be expected to read such a text. But to see this old sinner in his all-too-human flesh—actually to hear him tease our universal appetite for peace, and our abhorrence of the idea of a next war—this seems to enter a new dimension of persuasiveness. Nevertheless, television exists, and we must live with it. Khrushchev is not Medusa; he is only a man, and it won't hurt us to look at him.

Fundamentally, the whole criticism of CBS's initiative in putting on this Khrushchev interview can be traced to a nervous mistrust of the American people's ability to distinguish truth from falsehood, to distinguish a good man from a smiling man, to distinguish slickness from integrity. But if, after all that has happened since 1945 on the international scene, the American people are in any danger of being duped by one hour of Khrushchev, then what hope is there that the American people can think sensibly on any subject? What's the use of debating anything—or voting on anything—if all experience and argument and instinct must crumble into dust before sixty minutes of sly smiles? What's the use of a Republic, if the people must be patriarchally protected from every mendacity or disturbance? And who's to do the protecting?

The Soviet Union is a fact; Mr. Khrushchev is a fact; and it is a fact that the United States has decided to try, if it is at all possible, to live on the same planet with these facts and not to plunge everyone into the horrors of a thermonuclear war. We believe that it is the American way to face facts—to fight to change them, if we must, but to face them. And we congratulate CBS for showing us the face of Nikita Khrushchev.

—GILBERT SELDES.

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### NEW LIBERAL

"THE ISMS IN 1957" (*SR* June 8) I found very interesting and stimulating. I have discovered that I am a liberal, according to A. M. Schlesinger, Jr.

ROY L. MYERS.

Eagle Pass, Texas.

### MORE REPRESENTATIVE?

I ENJOYED the "Isms" until I got to William Buckley, Jr.—and the incredibly sublime irrationality of his unthinking spiritualism: "Certain problems [and] certain questions are closed . . . The answers to these are matters of faith—truths incorruptible and imperishable" (and presumably not subject to thought, analysis, and change). Surely you could have found a more representative spokesman for the sophisticated conservatism of a Hamilton or Clarence B. Randall than Buckley.

KURT L. HANSLOVE.

St. Clair Shores, Mich.

### USELESS SUMMERS

I WOULD LIKE to see blazoned in headlines across the country Joseph Wood Krutch's statement that, "there are few to whom it ever occurs that putting more money into schools is not a sure way of getting more education, or that any deficiencies which happen to become manifest will not be remedied by putting more money into school buildings" (*SR* May 18). It is as necessary in our society to be in favor of school levies as it is to be against sin. Let us hope the time has almost arrived when we can stop pouring ever-increasing funds into an antiquated educational structure. What is the point, for instance, of building more facilities to be locked up, unused, for three months out of every year?

GRACE M. WATSON.

Seattle, Wash.

### BRAVO

"BRAVO" FOR Robert L. Shayon in "What Would You Do?" (*SR* June 8).

LEON MILLER.

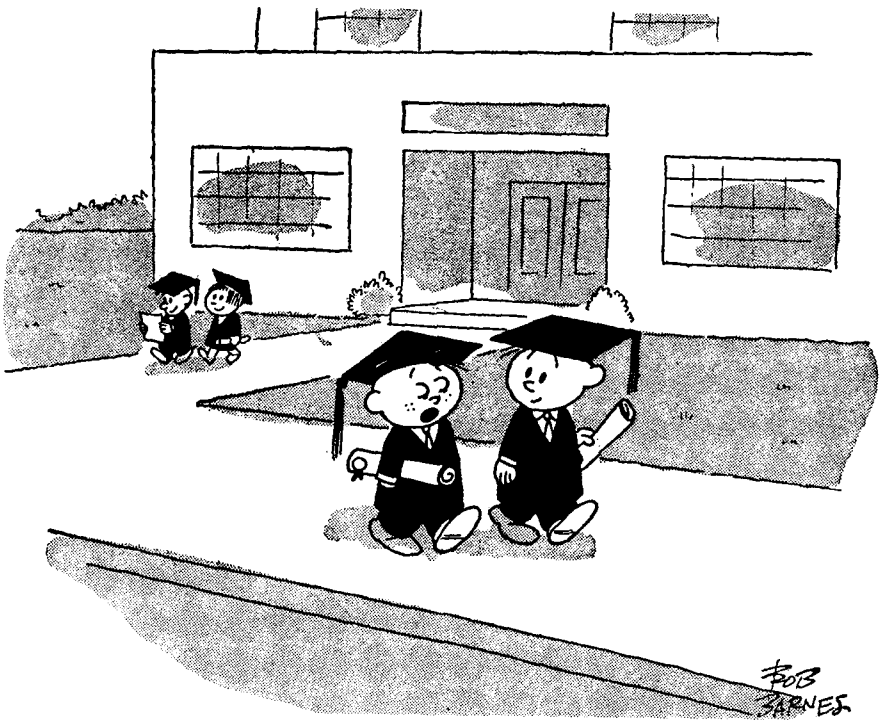
Brooklyn, N. Y.

### GET OUT OF ACTING

I THINK THAT Robert Lewis Shayon missed a point. The American public is not unaware that among its prominent business, professional, and public men there are a substantial number whose intellectual aspirations and attainments are notable. Such men are, nonetheless, admired in measure of their success as business, professional, and public figures. What happened in Van Doren's case was the glorification of a man whose career is based on the consumption and distribution of knowledge and thought for its sake alone, without regard for "practical" results: a scholar and a teacher. It must be admitted, I think, that it has been a long time since these pursuits have been held in so high esteem as they are since Van Doren's reign as "21" champion. My own reservations about Van Doren are based on entirely different grounds. They concern his transparent and increasingly hambone agonizing over the questions. Acting is still a game for professionals.

DONALD KAHN.

Rose Valley, Pa.




"It's pretty frightening to know that you know all there is to know, isn't it?"

### VALUABLE COMMENT

WE ARE ONE of those offbeat families whose rooftop does not support a television antenna. In spite of this, or perhaps because of it, let me offer a firm vote of thanks to *SR* and Robert Shayon. Mr. Shayon has presented not only a perceptive criticism of the present-day mania for categorizing, commercializing, and proselytizing everything from laxatives and religion to human intelligence, he has offered indirect but valuable comment on the current and future need for more liberal-arts education.

E. T. ALLEN.

Hamden, Conn.

### LET'S HAVE LOOKS

N.C. PUT THE finger (*SR* May 25) on why today's books aren't memorable—the characters aren't. But his selection of models is open to criticism. Emma Bovary —who can tell me what she looked like? And Hemingway's people—well, for instance, what did Lady Brett Ashley look like? ("Brett was damned good looking.") And Jake Barnes, or Robert Cohn —he'd had his nose worked on, true— Harvey, Bill, nobody could describe them because Hemingway didn't.

I nominate W. O. Gant as the most flesh-and-blood fictional character of the past half-century. And trailing him are all of Thomas Wolfe's other characters, whom he not only described initially but kept describing whenever they appeared. And McTeague, of "McTeague." Why is it considered a weakness to portray a character's appearance?

C. J. SARVIS.

Boise, Idaho.

### HOW TRITE IS MOM?

IN *SR* JUNE 8 Phyllis McGinley closes her review of Mary McCarthy's "Memories of a Catholic Girlhood" with the sentence, "One can picture her in any number of difficult, sharp-witted, fervent roles; but as the happy wife and mother, no. There is not that much triteness in her."

Just what characteristics does Miss McGinley think the "happy wife and mother" exhibits? There are those (and they are neither unthinking nor unfeeling) who would use just these adjectives to *describe* the role of successful wifehood and motherhood.

MRS. R. P. DUMONT.

Washington, D. C.

### MORE THAN ONE STRING

AN item in TRADE WINDS (*SR* May 18), identifies me as a writer for *Reader's Digest*. I have written for the *Digest* but I also write for several other magazines, all of them good customers I don't want to offend, or lose.

VANCE PACKARD.

New Canaan, Conn.

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SR GOES TO THE MOVIES

## The Presumptuous Preminger

"PERHAPS," Bernard Shaw said in his preface to **"Saint Joan,"** "it will be as well for the public to see the play while I am still alive." He was referring to those who would have excised all references "to such tedious matters as the Church, the feudal system, the inquisition, the theory of heresy." Shaw went on: "The experienced knights of the blue pencil, having saved an hour-and-a-half by disembowelling the play, would at once proceed to waste two hours in building elaborate scenery, having real water in the River Loire, and staging an obviously sham fight for possession of it, with the victorious French led by Joan on a real horse." And he suggested that such a rewritten play might well end with Joan being burnt on the stage.

Otto Preminger, in turning "Saint Joan" into a movie, has pretty well followed Shaw's prescription for ruining the play. The three-and-a-half hours of the original have been cut to about two hours of film. There is some talk of heresy, but not very much, and the magnificent inquisitorial scene, the shining hour, so to speak, of the play, has been considerably shortened, as well as being shorn of some of its most brilliant dialogue. And sure enough, Joan burns on a real stake, even wincing as a stray gas jet gets too close. Part of the blame for turning one of the most promising of movie projects into one of the most dismal of results must go to Graham Greene, who wrote the screenplay and who, one would have thought, would naturally have turned to Shaw's preface for guidance and warning. But most of the blunders, it would appear, were Otto Preminger's. He was both producer and director. He it was who hired an avowedly Catholic writer to "fix" what has been called an essentially Protestant play. He, after all, allowed Greene to carve an epilogue into two equal parts, one for the beginning, one for the end of the play. He allowed him to eliminate whole scenes, add others (such as Joan's being shown the torture instruments), and he allowed him to leave out many of the witty and sparkling lines.

Mr. Preminger's production is not only shoddy, poorly costumed, and unimaginatively staged, but it contains some remarkably poor performing as well. You may remember that Preminger scoured the world, with all the attendant fanfare in the press and on television, for a girl to play Joan. He found a girl, Jean Seberg, who under his guidance turns in a performance that, to put it mildly, is not up to professional standards. Miss Seberg is nineteen, has a sweet face, and has Mr. Preminger to thank for having so much to live down at an early age. Richard Widmark's Dauphin we can ascribe to bad direction. Excellent actors like John Gielgud, Felix Aylmer, and Barry Jones are not seen to full advantage, since so many of their lines were cut, particularly in the case of Gielgud's Warwick. All in all, I suppose, it is simply a matter of the play having got into the wrong hands.

* * *

In an early scene of **"Island in the Sun,"** a political and romantic tour of a British West Indies island, an American journalist asks Harry Belafonte (who plays a local union leader) what is the most important problem the island faces. "Color, mister," Belafonte snaps back, and color is certainly at the heart of the story. For instance, Joan Fontaine becomes enamored of Harry Belafonte, only to be spurned by him because she would hinder his ambitions for his people and himself. John Justin, governor's aide and novelist, falls in love with a pretty island girl "of color" (Dorothy Dandridge), and eventually carries her off to England, presumably to marry her. Joan Collins and James Mason, of the aristocratic Fleury family, discover there is Negro blood in their lineage, and for Miss Collins this is particularly embarrassing because she had been about to marry the son of a British peer. However, luckily for her, she further learns that her mother had committed an indiscretion early in her marriage and that she was consequently spared "the touch of the tarbrush." She is free to marry the boy with a serene conscience. So far as exploring any of these issues with sensitivity goes the movie is a total loss. James Mason, however, turns in a most impressive performance as the son of a rich planter, and the CinemaScope photography is always lush and eyefilling. Robert Rossen directed, Darryl Zanuck produced, and the story is taken from an Alec Waugh novel.

—HOLLIS ALPERT.

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BROADWAY POSTSCRIPT

## "Othello"—Take Three

STRATFORD, CONN.

WITH the opening of "Othello," the American Shakespeare Festival Theatre and Academy inaugurates its third summer season. In its first two years of operation the ASFTA has been correcting the original mistakes that came from its directors' having had no clear idea of what an American approach to Shakespeare should be. Was it to be a grandiose nineteenth-century manner of presentation with everything very loud and very decorative? The structure of the theatre, with its huge proscenium-opening and deep stage, pointed towards such operatic spectacle, and even though the architect's sketches showed an Elizabethan stage reconstruction which would completely fill in the proscenium-opening the actual designs used were pictorial scenery. Was it to be a kind of second-hand British Shakespeare in which less vocally competent American actors spoke all the lines in solemn awe of the playwright's greatness? The ASFTA selection of Raymond Massey as the star, in advance of their obtaining a director, promised this Grand Rapids style of bardology. Or was it to be a Shakespeare subordinated to the purpose of expressing contemporary American values? A talk with Denis Carey, the British director imported to steer ASFTA through a chaos he never made, indicated that he would try to get someting human, virile, and vital out of a young, untried supporting company.

Mr. Carey cast courageously from actors whom he had never seen perform and with whom he'd never worked. And this courage turned out to be his one lasting contribution to the ASFTA. For in the midst of the first-season hurly-burly he was persuaded to take on an additional problem, namely the inclusion of a Negro actor in two plays which had no roles written for interracial casting. The actor was Earle Hyman, whose appearances as Othello off-Broadway and the Earl of Morocco at City Center had earned him a warm recognition from the critics. Thus, it came to pass that Mr. Hyman was given two minor roles in that first disastrous season. But in that disaster he, Christopher Plummer, Peter Donat, and Fritz Weaver showed such talent that a departure was suggested for John Houseman, when he came to take over the ASFTA for its second season. He rebuilt the stage into a more open one and tried a mixture of older actors with whom he had worked previously and some young actors new to him but familiar with the open stages of Antioch, Ohio, and Stratford, Ontario. The latter included Jacqueline Brookes, Donald Harron, and Mr. Hyman. But unfortunately for ASFTA, Earle Hyman had meanwhile won himself star status with a great performance on Broadway in the title role of "Mr. Johnson" and had already signed to play Dunois opposite Siobhan McKenna in the Cambridge Drama Festival production of "Saint Joan." This limited his Stratford appearance to three weeks. But again, with only a few lines, he shone brightly in the midst of a relatively unsuccessful "King John," and everyone could see that he and the other young actors represented a ripe crop for the future.

Now, in the first production of the 1957 season, this crop is being harvested, with Mr. Hyman playing Othello, and Miss Brookes Desdemona. Interviewed after a dress rehearsal, the thirty-year-old Negro actor revealed that the role of Othello carries for him a deep personal meaning. It is not, as one might suspect, the bitter resentment against society for its discriminatory practices that has become the cliche of so many socially significant plays. Rather it is that just as Othello is an alien in Venetian society, a non-placed human being who feels he must constantly prove himself, so did the young southern Negro, shipped up to Brooklyn for public-school education in a white society, feel a goading pressure to place himself.

"It was only six years ago that I came to realize that my placement depended on myself. Where I used to want to lose the difference between myself and the people around me, I now believe that it's just that difference that's important. For me, this is the same apotheosis Othello undergoes after he has killed Desdemona."

Mr. Hyman's personal experiences are not too different from those undergone by the protagonist of "Take a Giant Step." He felt driven to justify his place in P.S. 26 and Franklin K. Lane High School by getting the best grades in his class. And it was only when he reached the age of thirteen, and the girl-question arose, that he found himself being left out of certain parties. He turned to the theatre as a kind of escape, and acted in the high-school dramatic program playing handymen and other supporting roles. "I didnt play no lovers or anything like that," he jokes. He had a good ear, excellent English teachers, and so he decided to become a professional actor rather than accept a scholarship at Columbia. Luckily he soon got a part in "Anna Lucasta," where Harry Wagstaff Gribble taught a relatively untutored cast enough of the rudiments of acting to make the production a long-running success which kept him employed for more than six years here and in England.

In discussing some of the directors he has worked with since, he remembers Arthur Lithgow as the man who kept after him all during the run of "Othello' 'at Antioch because Earle couldn't bring himself to say the seemingly ludicrous "O! O! O!" in the final scene.

"Arthur kept saying 'How do you know you can't do something until you try it?' and, sure enough, when I did finally break down and try it in the last three performances I found I could."

Of Robert Lewis, who directed him in "Mr. Johnson," Mr. Hyman recalls two simple sentences which for him unlocked a whole new method of acting. These were, "Come on the stage to find out, to listen, and to see." and "Don't play the part, let the part play you." From Herbert Berghof ("Waiting for Godot") he learned how valuable it can be for a director to have such a fanatic love of a play that he infects the whole cast with it. And from speech-teacher Fanny Bradshaw, with whom he still takes lessons, he has learned a non-colloquial American speech and the relaxation that permit him to go all out in Shakespeare night after night without losing his voice.

For his present director, John Houseman, he has the greatest admiration as a man with a fantastic imagination and the ability to make every detail lead up to his concept of the play as a whole. In this third "Othello," the key to which is Mr. Houseman's stress on the unnaturalness of a general's young wife brought to live in a garrison of rough soldiers, Mr. Hyman is happiest about the performance of Alfred Drake (also an alumnus of P.S. 26) as Iago. "You see, I don't think Iago should be evil from the word go, which is what you usually get. Alfred plays it as an old army sergeant who starts to get even for his not being made the General's lieutenant and by circumstance is gradually led into doing something worse than he had originally intended."

—HENRY HEWES.

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VERSE

# An Antidote to Miltown

***"You Can't Get There From Here," by Ogden Nash** (Little, Brown. 190 pp. $3.75), is the latest gathering of the work of the inimitable poet who is both Institution and Grandfather.*

By Ben Ray Redman

NASH the Man and Nash the Poet are well on their way to becoming Nash the Institution. A generation of readers has grown up that would find it hard to imagine a world without Nash, a world without his jagged lines, his inversions (no less famous than many religious conversions), his wry rhymes, and his polymorphic prosody. This being so, it is high time that his work was made the subject of Definitive Criticism. But criticism of what kind, what school? Ah, there's the rub!

The historical-comparative school might give him a working over as a jovial Juvenal. The psychoanalytic school could have a Roman holiday with his confessed likes and dislikes, his fears, joys, and obsessions, all of which, of course, may be traced to traumatic experiences that he tripped over before the age of three, or earlier. One Nash on the couch might well prove worth a gross of ordinary recumbent poets. The technical-metrical school could drive itself quite mad by trying to define his poetic devices, and distempers. And the New Critics, now not so new? How I should like to see what they would do to and with him, if he were turned over to them bound but not gagged! I can imagine some of the erudite, recondite, hermetic, crabbed, jargonized products of their "close readings." How useful it would be to have profound studies of Nash's poetic strategy, his texture, his ambiguities and ambivalences, his dichotomies! And if the New Critics were a bit rough with him, who could blame them? Has not he himself, in this new book, hit them where it hurts most—in the vocabulary?

> Some words, like ugly courtiers,
> Should lag behind the portieres.
> Here's two such hippotomi:
> Ambivalence, dichotomy.
> I deprecate their prevalence,
> Dichotomy, ambivalence.
> Why do the learned quarterlies
> Such couthless cant immortalize?

Were there but space enough and time, I might attempt criticism along one of the lines I have suggested. But I must content myself with being curt and reportorial. The essential fact is that there is as much first-rate Nash, and as little second-rate Nash, in this book as in any of his earlier volumes. Nothing is stale, nothing is withered; the laurels are still in the woods, flourishing and uncut. The old master shows no signs of weariness. His pitching arm is as strong as ever, his control as sure. But he has—yes, he has—mellowed. He hates less, likes more, and has extended his area of tolerance. He, who never suffered fools otherwise than madly, is now as often as not willing to let them go their ways with only a gentle chiding. He is practising coexistence with folly, foible, and fad, on a scale that he would have found impossible when he was merely a bachelor, and later only a husband and a father. But now he is a grandfather. *Non sum qualis eram . . .*

In a way it is a pity that this tolerance should invade his spirit at this particular moment in American history. When I reviewed his preceding book, "The Private Dining Room" (*SR* April 11, 1953), I spoke of him as a seeing-eye dog in the country of the blind. How well he served for years in that capacity! And now what an opportunity is offered him in a tranquilized America! He could, if he would, remain our one wholly anxious citizen; he could serve us as the antidote to Miltown and its similars. He could open eyes, glazed by happy pills, to the realities of our existence. And, indeed, it must be said, in all fairness, that during the rest of the time his verse does not suffer. A dozen poems prove that he is still a keen disliker; his dealings with Miss Nancy Mitford show that he can slit a silly neck as prettily as ever. The gift of eloquent brevity is still his.

This book demonstrates again what fit readers have long known: there is much more to Nash than the famous Nash tricks and trademarked practices. He is as skilful in regular verse forms as in his own, God-forbid-that-it-be-imitated, style. Read "Don't Be Cross Amanda," "Exit, Pursued by a Bear," "The Buses Headed for Scranton," and "A Tale of the Thirteenth Floor," if you would test his range.

Happy baby-sitting, Grandpa!

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# Private Eye

***"New and Selected Poems," by Kenneth Fearing*** *(Indiana University Press. 143 pp. $3.95), dedicated to the fascinating but irritating city of New York, is the latest work of a poet who matured in the Depression.*

By Stanley Kunitz

THE voice of Kenneth Fearing is an unmistakable one. No contemporary poet has more effectively dedicated his career to the representation of what T. S. Eliot, in his essay on Baudelaire, described as "the sordid life of a great metropolis." It cannot be said flatly that Fearing either loves or hates New York, but he is not seduced by it, he does not habitually celebrate it, and he never forgets, in his role of the quizzical pedestrian, those bleak images of the city's meanness and indifference and violence that so crowded his eyes in the Depression years when his art matured.

In "New and Selected Poems," his seventh book of verse, which affords a welcome opportunity to review the work of some thirty years, we cannot fail to note the constancy of his vision. The same cards, however reshuffled, keep turning up: we are in a world threatened by newspaper headlines and sudden death; a world of cops and gangsters, the hunters and the hunted; of stuffed shirts and frightened little men; of cigar stores and drug stores and seedy barrooms and pinball arcades; of doubts and guilts and inquisitions. Such materials would seem to posit a poet of rage and revolution, but Fearing does not characteristically climb to that level of intensity. His tone, for the most part, remains ironic. If he is a revolutionary poet, out of the proletarian tradition of the Thirties, and the best survivor of that tradition, he is one without a revolution to propose. One of his favorite disguises is that of the investigator, the private eye, whose professional pride constrains him, almost against his will, to crack the case.

Fearing's poems are always asking questions: "What will you do when the phone rings and they say to you: What will you do?" . . . "But what if the police find out? What if the wires are down? What if credit is refused? What if the banks fail?" . . . "What is one more night in a lifetime of nights?" The structures are incremental, largely based on repetitions, with little impulse towards the grandeur of resolution.

> Question mark, question mark,
> question mark, question mark,
> And you, fantasy Frank, and
> dreamworld Dora and hallucination Harold, and delusion
> Dick, and nightmare Ned,
> What is it, how do you say it,
> what does it mean, what's the
> word. . . .

Though a handful of Fearing's poems evince a degree of optimism about man's destiny, he is usually too aware of the malady of our time to deceive himself with easy formulas for salvation. At times indeed he seems to settle a bit too comfortably, with a shrug of his shoulders, into the resignation of spiritual fatigue. "I am tired of following invisible lives down intangible avenues to fathomless ends."

Somewhat paradoxically, this social

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realist speaks to us of the unreality of modern existence. His poems are populated by cliff-dwellers who own neither gods nor heroes, and who have lost finally their faith in themselves. It is by no means an accident that Fearing so frequently introduces sorcerers, wizards, astrologers, and other apostles of the degraded miracle into the world of his invention.

Fearing's ear for speech rhythms is remarkably keen, and he handles the vernacular without any trace of self-consciousness. His long cadenced line derives from Whitman, but he has made it very much his own, tinctured with an acidulous wit and sensitive to varying pressures. He aims at a poetry that is at once exciting and understandable: "Everything in this volume has been written with the intention that its meaning should disclose itself at ordinary reading tempo." I am not inclined to quarrel with the virtues of excitement and readability, but I wonder, as I look back at Fearing's career, with a good deal of admiration for his gifts and accomplishment, whether his development has not been restricted by the stubborn limitations of his esthetics.

His art of brilliant surfaces and quick contemporaneity seemed more daring once, as a poetic configuration, than it does today, though the best poems keep their early lustre. In response to the new textures of an age, perhaps his greatest daring would be to change.

## FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT NO. 731

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*Answer to Literary Crypt No. 730*

The solar system has no anxiety about its reputation.

—EMERSON.

# Fiction

*Continued from page 12*

Carpentier's third novel, "The Lost Steps," was a critical success last year in this country, but was inferior to the present book, which has a nervous and exciting excellence, as of a Haitian drum, high pitched because of the heat, communicating something of the frenzy as well as the words of the message. —JOHN COOK WYLLIE.

**FINLAND'S WAR:** Most of us have forgotten that during World War II Finland allied herself with Germany and fought a long, losing battle in the borderland of Karelia. Vaino Linna calls all this back to mind in **"The Unknown Soldier"** (Putnam, $4), a novel that has been quite a success in his native Finland but will probably strike most American readers as too special, too narrowly aimed at those who lived it. While Mr. Linna paints an authoritative, grim picture of the warfare raging around snowy pine forests and icy lakes, he has neglected his protagonists. None of them ever comes to life, and soon a gray monotony begins to numb our minds whether we follow episodes of action or listen to the long dialogues of the soldiers. Once in a while, the author manages to break through the monotony, particularly when he presents the ever-rebellious Finnish non-coms, who display a singular lack of respect for their superiors. The translation (by an unidentified translator) is wooden.
—RICHARD PLANT.

**YORKSHIRE DOOM:** The first of Hubert Nicholson's books to be published in America, **"Sunk Island"** (Coward-McCann, $3.50), is a tale of love and fate under the gray, unbreaking skies of the Yorkshire coast, written with the brooding simplicity and intensity of Thomas Hardy. Young Roger Wellincroft, plodding and inarticulate, courts Louise Kilner, a composed and comfortable woman, but it is her younger sister who stirs the suitor's unguessed feelings. Ida is an arresting figure—sudden dark, elusive, electrical. Her power over Roger is made entirely real, and the happiness she brings him plays like fox-fire in the darkening tale. But Ida is secretly coughing her life away, and it is the rejected sister who comes to care for Ida and comfort Roger.

Mr. Nicholson's people are wholly realized in their groping and finding, their pain and patience, their admissions and silences. —W. H.

**CLOAK-AND-DAGGER:** Bernard Wolfe's uneven but absorbing novel ***"In Deep"***

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(Knopf, $3.95) tells the story of an oceanographer named Robert Garmes, who goes to Havana in a private pursuit of vengeance after his friend and partner, Barto Caro, is murdered. Before he knows it he is caught in a network of intrigue, "in deep" with an analogous rapture and courtship of death. Caro's murderer, it develops, was Michael Brod, a long-time, high-level Communist undercover and hatchet man. Caro was almost a pawn in his maneuvers, his involvement running back to a bitter disillusionment at Brod's hands in the Spanish Civil War. Garmes too becomes a counter in the bigger game. In drastically variable writing, Wolfe at times employs a mish-mash of Hammett-Hemingway-Spillane. The result is a flickering, interesting, needlessly vulgarized, momentarily brilliant, frequently exasperating book.

—EDMUND FULLER.

**LOST SALVATION:** In her first novel, **"House of the Angel"** (translated by Joan Coyne MacLean; McGraw-Hill, $3), Beatriz Guido, a young South American, comes forward as a writer of excellent promise. Her slender story centers around one violent incident. A duel over a political issue takes place in "the house of the angel"—the home Ana Castro shares with her family in Buenos Aires. Ana, daughter of an important political leader, dreams romantically of Deputy Pablo Aguirre, youngest member of her father's party and one of the principals in the duel. She goes to Aguirre's room on the pretence of giving him a scapular as divine protection. What she both dreads and longs for takes place. A brutal and erotic struggle ends in the destruction of the "house of the angel"—Ana's budding mind and soul. Henceforth she is lost to salvation. She and Aguirre are bound together only by their mutual hate.

It will be interesting to watch the future course of Miss Guido's work. Her literary manner is stormy, romantic, and she strives for dark and tragic effects. Throughout the narrative she sustains an elaborate system of symbols. Her gifts are substantial and varied, and one may fully expect fine and serious things from her.

—LULLA ADLER.

**ALSO NOTED:** **"The Lonely Women,"** by Gerda Rhodes (Ballantine, $3.50; paperbound, 35¢), explains the "slimming" industry and its neurotic, dedicated women who service the assembly-line of pathetic women who crave the "Sylphette" look. This hardboiled, theatrical novel seems to prove that the female executive can be a vicious species.

—S. P. MANSTEN.

## The Catty School

*Continued from page 9*

who nowadays could respect a girl described as "high principled"? It is unlikely that Jane Austen would have felt it necessary to underscore the point with "fanatically" and "screamed."

Even a man doing a kindly act can be clawed. In "Landfall" Helen Hull shows Dr. Pickney, a departmental chairman (catty writers, like professors, feel at home in college settings), calling up Anice McReal, whose husband is ill. Sympathetically he tells her of some graduate students:

> "They feel they've lost a good pilot." Suddenly enamored of his figure, Dr. Pickney went on for several sentences about unknown channels and rocks ahead and who could chart the course. Anice had heard him at dinner parties, she knew just how his color deepened and the neat tufts of gray eyebrows and moustache jumped in creative excitement.

For Anice is a catty writer's woman, not a wife worried about her husband. She too has the unerring eye for damaging detail.

In a real *tour de force* Mary McCarthy combines a number of these devices in a few sentences:

> When the vegetable soup had been removed and the napkins still lay rolled in their napkin rings before the empty places, he slipped into the hall to telephone, pausing to glance at himself in the men's room mirror, where he saw only bright delft-blue eyes, flat, rather wooden features with a certain set of resolve to the jaw, and a Bermuda Christmas tan that gave a "finish" to the whole, like a wax stain on floorboards. This simulacrum reassured him; he caulked his face for the inquiry. "Give me the Co-op," he murmured legato, to Switchboard, with a sliding determination in his voice. The store phone was finally answered by Mrs. Tryk, the Co-op or soda shop manageress, who shouted into it as usual in a surly, contumelious voice.

Trivial, but damaging detail; guilt by association with vegetable soup and waxed floorboards; a moment of vanity; the soda-shop reference to Mrs. Tryk; the choice of phrases—*Bermuda*

### LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

Column Two should read: 17, 10, 12, 19, 4, 11, 9, 8, 3, 15, 20, 13, 2, 18, 1, 7, 16, 14, 5, 6.

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*Christmas tan, simulacrum, calked, legato, sliding determination, surly, contumelious*—all are there. Even the delft-blue of the eyes is somehow a defect. Whatever else can be said against the catty writer one cannot allege subtlety or understatement.

The beauty of the style is that it is so easy to apply to all sorts of situations. For instance, one can imagine it applied to a scene at Valley Forge in the winter of 1777-78.

> George Washington limped into the cramped dining room, which many years later would be much admired by the DAR wives of bank presidents and pharmacists from Kansas and Iowa. He had chilblains, and the Philadelphia shoemaker, accustomed to sedentary Quakers, had not allowed enough room for the General's large and somewhat flat feet. Lafayette, already in the room, tried to maintain his dignity despite a tendency to sniffle. The plebeian air of the Schuylkill had proved rather trying to his large aristocratic nose. As a rural Virginian, Washington found it difficult to avoid addressing the young man as "Marquis," but being unsure of the pronunciation he settled upon "My son." It would look good in the history books and could be spoken with less chance of having his false teeth pop out on the floor. Privately he damned Bostonians. If that plump fool, Paul Revere, had spent less time riding around the countryside he might have learned to make a set of teeth with a spring which worked.
>
> While the General explored his mind for a suitable remark and his mouth to determine if his teeth would open, Lafayette wiped his inflamed nose with a none-too-clean cambric handkerchief. His laundress, much given to Hollands, had failed to deliver fresh linen. In France soiled linen was not too damaging, but America had as yet not lost the English love of ritualistic cleanliness.

By this time any discussion of plans for the Battle of Germantown, that straggling village devoted to scrapple and sauerkraut, would seem pretty trivial.

It must be granted that some of these devices have been used by satirists from the beginning. Neither cats nor catty remarks are a recent invention. But perhaps not since the time of the Pharoahs has the cat been such a central deity as it is with today's publishers of sophisticated writing. Alexander Pope was being thoroughly catty when he described Addison:

> Peace to all such! but were there
> One whose fires
> True Genius kindles, and fair
> Fame inspires;
> Blest with each talent and each
> art to please,
> And born to write, converse, and
> live with ease:
> Should such a man, too fond to
> rule alone,
> Bear, like the Turk, no brother
> near the throne.
> View him with scornful, yet with
> jealous eyes,
> And hate for arts that caused
> himself to rise;
> Damn with faint praise, assent
> with civil leer,
> And without sneering, teach the
> rest to sneer;
> Willing to wound, and yet afraid
> to strike,
> Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
> Alike reserved to blame, or to
> commend,
> A tim'rous foe, and a suspicious
> friend;
> Dreading even fools, by Flatt'rers
> besieged,
> And so obliging, that he ne'er
> obliged . . .

Yet even here there is the recognition of true genius. And in the same poem is the tribute to the physician whose "art and care" preserved Pope's life:

> O Friend! may each domestic
> bliss be thine!
> Be no unpleasing Melancholy
> mine:
> Me, let the tender office long engage,
> To rock the cradle of reposing
> Age,
> With lenient arts extend a
> Mother's breath,
> Make Languor smile, and smooth
> the bed of Death,
> Explore the thought, explain the
> asking eye,
> And keep a while one parent from
> the sky!
> On cares like these if length of
> days attend,
> May Heaven, to bless those days,
> preserve my friend!

Thus, the rapier-tongued satirist, who described his life as one "long disease," ends on the human note. Along with Jane Austen and Dickens and Mark Twain, Pope could share the human predicament. The truly catty writer cannot; he—more often she—must look down upon it from the height of three martinis. He cannot admit, as did Sinclair Lewis, that George Babbitt was partly himself, nor share Huck Finn's feeling when the King and the Duke are for good reason tarred and feathered: "Well, it made me sick to see it; and I was sorry for them poor pitiful rascals . . ."

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*(Continued on page 30)*

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(Continued from page 29)

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JUNE 29, 1957

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# BERLIOZ'S "TROYENS" AT COVENT GARDEN

—*Houston Torger.*

**Blanche Thebom as Dido and Jon Vickers as Aeneas in "Les Troyens."**

By ERNEST NEWMAN

LONDON.

JUST about a century ago Berlioz was nearing the end of the composition of his opera "The Trojans," which he fondly hoped would establish him artistically in Europe as a whole, or at any rate financially in his own country. He was at the very height of his musical and intellectual powers all through the 1850s (he had been born in 1803). The realization of the Trojan subject in music and in stage action cost him an immense amount of work and worry during the major part of that decade; and we are fortunate enough to possess a detailed record of his broodings upon the opera, his herculean struggles with it, his frustrations and delights in connection with it, in his letters to Liszt's paramour, the Princess von Sayn-Wittgenstein. The work was to prove, in the end, his *Schmerzenskind.* In Paris the national theatre refused to provide a home for it. A private impresario, one Carvalho, though he dared not undertake the financial risk of a production of the huge and exacting work in its entirety, finally put on the stage the second half of it—"The Trojans at Carthage"—though not without considerable mutilation of this. The remainder—"The Capture of Troy"—Berlioz never heard. He died, a tragically hurt and embittered man, in 1869.

From that day to ours the work has never succeeded in establishing itself in the repertory. For one thing, it is too long for a single evening yet not wholly adaptable to two. Under ordinary opera-house conditions the two sections can be compressed into one only at a certain expense to both; and in any case few opera houses or impresarios have had the courage or the finance to tackle that problem. A very intelligent Scottish musician, Dr. Erik Chisholm, gave the work in two evenings in Glasgow in 1925 with forces largely amateur. The Oxford University Opera Club essayed it, under Professor Westrup, in one-evening form in 1950: this, of course, necessitated a great deal of pruning. Sir Thomas Beecham has given us two or three splendid radio performances of the work under the auspices of the BBC; but the Covent Garden performance early in June was the first wholly professional public one in Britain. Sundry cuts were of course necessary, but not much that is really vital was sacrificed, and the evening was naturally a very long one.

Hardly anyone in the large audience that night could have known anything at all of the work except the "Royal Hunt and Storm" music, which appears fairly frequently in our concert programs; so it was anyone's guess

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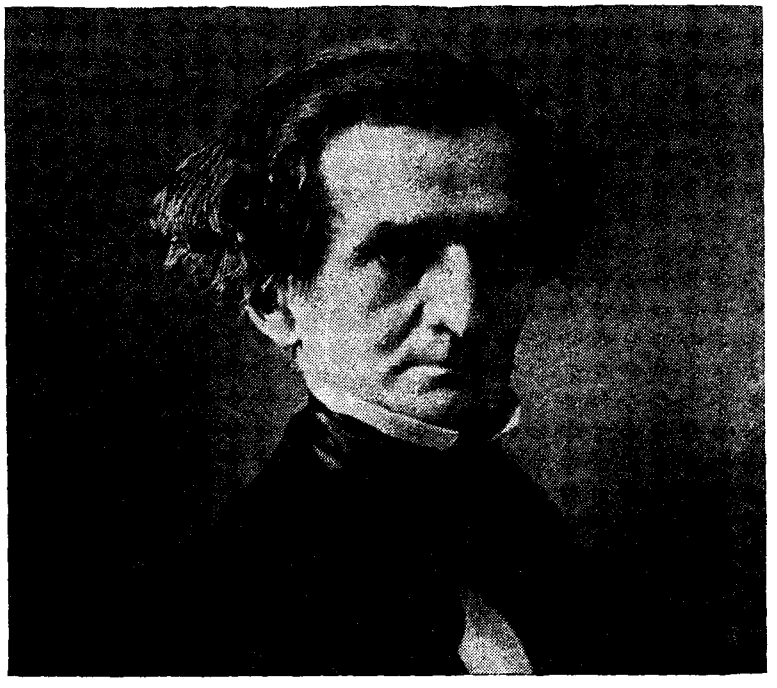
what the general reaction of the audience would be. As it happened, there was no doubt about that from the beginning. Berlioz's "classical" idiom, in which the opening scenes of the work are mainly couched, must have been, on the whole, novel to most of the listeners; yet it was manifest to every experienced and sensitive frequenter of musical milieux at the end of the first act that the audience had been moved to its depths; and as the long evening wore on, and the "romantic" atmosphere succeeded the "classic," not a shadow of doubt could remain that here was one of the greatest achievements of nineteenth-century opera. The work has its little weaknesses: what long work in any genre has not? But there is a great deal of tremendously impressive music in it, and really *dramatic* music at that. Like all Berlioz's music, this could have been written by no composer but himself; but he is as fully master of his idiosyncratic idiom as if, like most other masters, he had had a century's traditions to guide and uphold him.

"The Trojans" is a truly stupendous work, and until a man has seen and heard it he can hardly lay claim to much more than a rudimentary knowledge of the composer—certainly of the dramatic composer. Why then, one keeps on asking, has it not succeeded in finding a sure place for itself in the world repertory? The tentative answers to that question are manifold. The work, as I have already said, is in its original—and alone authentic—form too long. It makes enormous demands not only on the financial resources of an opera house —for there is a large amount of fine "spectacle" in it—but on both the musical and the intellectual gifts of everyone concerned in the performance of it. (I myself am in doubt whether an ideal cast for it could be assembled anywhere today.) And the basic trouble is, perhaps, that only under the happiest combination of circumstances can we imagine the "production" side of the performance and the musical side being on the same intellectual level and, so to speak, in precisely the same emotional key from first to last.

The Covent Garden performance was wholly satisfactory neither on the musical nor the "production" side, though there was much in both places that commanded admiration. Berlioz's instructions for the staging are copious and definite; but at Covent Garden a good deal was done on the stage that should not have been done, a good deal was left undone that should have been done, and occasionally the right thing was done in an exasperatingly wrong way. I lack the space to substantiate these charges in detail: here I can only make them. Sir John Gielgud, the producer, is by profession an actor with, I am told, no particular knowledge of music; it was therefore only to be expected that he would do a number of things that either failed to do Berlioz justice or did him a positive injustice. The singing and acting, with Amy Schuard as Cassandra, Blanche Thebom as Dido, Lauris Elms as Anna, and Jon Vickers as Aeneas (to name only the principal roles) only now and then rose to full Berliozian height. Rafael Kubelik was the conductor.

Really to understand the mighty work demands a great deal more from the spectator-listener than just sitting in the theatre and letting himself be moved by what he sees and hears. One requires not only to know the score inside out but to be intimately acquainted with the first four books of the "Aeneid"—for Berlioz has done many things the clue to which (in Virgil) it has been impossible for him to work logically into the tissue of his stage action. The first thing to be grasped is that the whole purpose of the opera is expressed in the title. Its main subject is not, as many people imagine, the love of Dido and Aeneas but *the Trojans*—the long-drawn working-out by the rival gods and goddesses of the irreconcilable destinies of Troy and Carthage and Augustan Rome.

THE modern scores are misleading on this point. There are not, as the title-pages of these suggest, *two* operas, "La Prise de Troie" (in two acts) and "Les Troyens à Carthage" (in four), but, as Berlioz's original score makes perfectly plain, a single opera bearing the title "Les Troyens," with explanatory sub-headings consisting of (a) Acts I and II "The Capture of Troy," (b) Acts III, IV, and V "The Trojans at Carthage." The distinction is vital. From first to last the destinies of Troy and Carthage and Rome, not the vicissitudes of any particular individual, even Dido, even Aeneas, have been the poet-composer's central concern; and any production that does not bring this basic fact home to the spectator at every step has largely failed in its purpose. The problem is further complicated by the fact that while Berlioz has followed his adored Virgil step by step, the Roman poet tells part of the great story in his own person and part through the narrative and emotional comments of Aeneas. This procedure was bound to present Berlioz at two or three points with a tough problem of dramatic connection and suggestion which could not possibly be solved in the theatre. The inevitable result is confusion and mistake, the worst instance of this being the nonsensical placing of the wonderful Royal Hunt where it figures in the current scores and in the Covent Garden performance—as a "symphonic entr'acte" following the Carthage Act II. It is really not "symphonic," and assuredly not an "entr'acte" in the original, but a dramatically significant tableau placed between Acts III and IV in the original score.



**Hector Berlioz.**

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—*From* Charivari, *1863 (Culver).*

BERLIOZ AND WAGNER: "The 'Tannhauser' asks to see his little brother, 'Les Troyens'."

# "LES TROYENS" ON RECORDS

By ROBERT LAWRENCE

EDITOR'S NOTE: *In view of the current interest in Berlioz and the reissue of "The Trojans at Carthage" on the Ducretet-Thomson label,* RECORDINGS *reprints its review of the original issue (by Westminster) which appeared on September 27, 1952.*

HECTOR BERLIOZ had two lifelong literary passions: Virgil and Shakespeare. As a boy, he had occasion to learn the "Aeneid" in the home of his father, a cultured physician who dwelt not far from Lyons; later, in Paris, he fell in love simultaneously with the works of Shakespeare and the actress who interpreted them, Henrietta Smithson. Identification with the British poet was to bring him one of the greatest successes of his career, the "Romeo and Juliet" Symphony, hailed even in his lifetime (Berlioz did not often meet with praise from his French contemporaries). Admiration for Virgil was to launch him on his last important work, "The Trojans," and provide him with a scaffolding for failure.

No other work cost this composer quite so much suffering. Immersed not only in the story of Dido and Aeneas but in a vision of all Mediterranean antiquity, he composed both text and music. The result was an enormously long epic, bypassed at first by the Paris Opéra in favor of Wagner's revised "Tannhäuser" and later ignored by that institution. Practical need for production finally drove Berlioz to divide the work into two shorter operas: "The Fall of Troy" and "The Trojans at Carthage." The Carthaginian episode was given during Berlioz's lifetime; "The Fall of Troy" was never heard by him.

This composer, as stylist, offers a baffling problem. The exuberance of his youthful works, such as the "Symphonie Fantastique" and "Harold," their freedom of expression and bold handling of orchestral masses have earned him the tag of arch-romantic. Throughout his earlier years the creative pulse beat wildly. From the musical standpoint, however, he was always a formalist, a conservative whose love of balance and economy grew more marked with age. Many of the sounds made by his instruments were radical for the time; but the harmonies they played were traditional. The ascetic Berlioz of the last years conceived of "The Trojans" as a work in the direct line of his idols, Gluck and Spontini: noble, reserved, vast.

"The Fall of Troy" reaches the heights of classical drama. Strength and pathos are in text and music. The character of Cassandra is one of the great figures in opera, and the entrance of the Wooden Horse into the gates of Troy makes for an overwhelming scene. Less direct and more stately—also more cumbersome—is "The Trojans at Carthage." Here, inspiration alternates with conventionalized arias and duets. The sound of the music is wonderful but the mood sometimes remote. Clearly, Berlioz is trying for the spaciousness of antiquity, vistas of great colonnades, the sphere of mythical heroes.

The recording of "The Trojans at Carthage" is virtually complete. Except for one inconsequential cut (the second stanza of Hylas's song), all of the score has been faithfully presented. For the Berlioz student this is an important opportunity to hear a major work never yet given here in operatic form and rarely produced in Europe.

From the standpoint of pleasurable, rather than scholarly, listening the album is less attractive. It might have been wiser to record both sections of "The Trojans" with suitable cuts, selecting the best sections of each. As matters now stand, there are too many passages that wrap themselves around the shaft of the work like a parasitic growth, and threaten to strangle it. How much of the recording's dulness is the fault of Berlioz and how much should be laid at the door of the performers (headed by conductor Hermann Scherchen) is hard to say, since presentations of "The Trojans" are too infrequent to have established any standards.

Most of the tempi are too brisk, with violations not only of metronomic markings but of dramatic effectiveness. Some of the orchestral playing, as in the ballet music, is brilliant. Other places lack nuance and occasionally, as in the horn solos of the "Royal Hunt," accuracy. In an opera demanding great voices, the singers unfortunately do not measure up to the task. Arda Mandikian, the Dido, lacks the weight and color of the true mezzo-soprano; Jean Giraudeau, as Aeneas, has simply not the pealing tones required; and the others, except for an agreeable Anna (Jennine Collard) and an expertly sung Narbal (Xavier Depraz), are in the same gray vein. A definitive "Trojans" by major artists is still awaited.

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# POINTS ON PORTABLES

FOR THOSE to whom music is as much a part of summer living as winter, the portable market is fuller than ever of wares ranging from the truly portable, and not very musical, to the truly musical and not very portable. Where the purchaser makes his compromise depends on how exacting his musical requirements are, and how much lugging about the unit must endure. Of course, there is a question of how much (£) you put down, and how much (pds.) you can carry away: what would be portable for R. Marciano would not be for you —or me.

Broadly considered, the market breaks down into four categories, of which three have measurable values. To dispose first of the one not measured: below $50 there are a number of ingenious makeshifts, in "vanity case" and "hat-box" size, manually operated, save for RCA Victor's center drop 45-rpm mechanism. These are extremely portable and highly limited in musical response; but if you want a pleasant companion on the back porch, or in some other secluded area, they may serve.

The $50-100 category—with a median about $80 ($79.99)—is covered by most of the prominent manufacturers, as the adjacent table attests. It is not really a trade secert that several of them emanate from the same factory, with varying name plates and slightly different "featurettes." A current trend to a four-speed changer is uniformly manifest, presumably to take care of the 16-rpm "talking book" speed but really, in my opinion,

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| | • | | • | • | |
| BOGEN | VP 17X | Variable 29-86 rpm (manual) | 12" | 10 watt amplifier, GE Pickup | $181.90 |
| LIBERTY | "Scott" | 4 speed | 2, 5"x7" detachable | Equalization, Diamond Stylus for Microgroove, 10 watt amplifier, output-input jacks | $199.50 |
| PILOT | "Encore" | 4 speed | 8", 6" | GE pickup, 8 watt amplifier, equalization, auxiliary jacks | $169.50 |

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because someone decided upon it as a salable innovation, and everybody else followed. 16-rpm has no present, or foreseeable, utility for musical purposes, but, other things being equal, you might as well have it if it is available (in most instances, it costs the manufacturer very little to put in the necessary controlling wheel). The "other things" should be a couple of speakers and at least a six-watt amplifier, plus separate bass and treble controls. In some models the work of "three controls" (on-off-volume, bass, treble) is done by two (on-off-volume treble, bass), but the functions should be provided for, to permit leveling off the inevitable over-production of sound from contemporary high-fidelity records in terms of such limited facilities. The reference to ODV (Other Details Vague") embraces such terms as "powerful compact amplifier" when the specifications are lacking, or "highly responsive special design speaker" when size of same has been thoughtfully omitted.

If this is the "economy" range, $100-150 marks the "utility" category. Here there is considerable fencing for advantage among the numerous manufacturers, with one favorable condition offsetting an unfavorable one, or a heavy investment in speaker efficiency balanced out by economy in the amplifier. Individual needs determine individual preference; but it is evident that a person primarily interested in quality reproduction might look into the Bogen VP 12 or the Decca DP 610, which do *not* incorporate changers and thus lack that convenience. These (and the Grundig-Majestic "Universatile," which uses the "Rex" center-drop changer mechanism for 33-rpm as well as 45-rpm) have the useful feature of a detachable speaker, which means that the turntable and pickup can be kept conveniently beside you, while the music is heard from an appropriate distance. For appearance's sake, some may prefer the Symphonic 1265, which is leather-covered, and for more varied uses the Granco AM-FM table model at $149.95 might be pref-

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# THE JAZZ MAINSTREAM

By NAT HENTOFF

EDITOR'S NOTE: RECORDINGS *is pleased to announce that* THE JAZZ MAINSTREAM *will be a regular department under Mr. Hentoff's name.*

IT HAS happily occurred to Victor to reissue six tracks from a particularly buoyant 1947 Louis Armstrong concert. The album, "Town Hall Concert Plus" (Victor LPM-1443) has been brought up to size by the addition of six more numbers recorded by Louis around the same period with varying personnel. The taste, humor, and consistency of such Armstrong colleagues of that era as Jack Teagarden and the late Sidney Catlett re-emphasize by contrast the raucous mediocrity of Louis's current unit (clarinetist Edmond Hall and the leader excepted). Included in the Town Hall recital is a mellow "Back O' Town Blues" with Louis's parenthetical order to an exhibitionistic patron to "Shut up, boy!" Among the added half-dozen, there is a lyrically flowing "I Want A Little Girl" on which Louis is joined by the beguiling Vic Dickenson whom modern trombonist Bob Brookmeyer has fondly categorized as "a shaggy dog trombonist"; and there is also Louis's own ruefully ingenuous song, "Some Day."

Another valuable set of reissues is "Mildred Bailey" (Regent MG-6032). There are far too few recordings available of the late Miss Bailey, a singer of sweet and supple strength. These ten were originally made for the long disappeared Majestic label in 1946. The accompaniment is variable, but Miss Bailey is in consummately relaxed form. How long, O Columbia, must we wait for the large, retrospective Bailey collection that was promised a few years ago?

A rare find is the latter half of the "Lena and Ivie" set (Jazztone J1262). The late Ivie Anderson was the most rewarding of all the singers Duke Ellington has ever engaged. She projected an instrumentalized huskiness that was a wholly individual combination of poignancy and yet tensile assurance. Her phrasing was always remarkably natural and certainly personal. The half-dozen Ivies here were made around 1946 for Black and White, another ghost of a label, after Ivie had left Ellington. There is some helpful tenor by Lucky Thompson and the bass of Charles Mingus is present on a few tracks, but Ivie's backing on these sessions is at least a light year away from what she normally received during her nearly twelve years with Ellington.

The "Lena" is Lena Horne, and her half of the volume, also recorded for Black and White in 1946, represents some of her best singing on records. Even then, Miss Horne was not a jazz singer although she sometimes came close to the spirit of that demanding métier; but on these numbers, she sings with an affecting lack of pretentiousness, a fair amount of musical acumen in phrasing and rhythmic control, and an appealing if not especially memorable sound.

More musically stimulating is a new album by Jackie Cain and her husband, Roy Kral. Most of their "Bits and Pieces" (ABC-Paramount ABC-163) consists of vocal duets with a brisk, authoritative modern jazz orchestra in the background. Mr. and Mrs. Kral are inventively instrumentalized singers to the point that they often substitute sweet-and-pungent vocables for words, and vocalize as if they were horns brought to life in a land with mores similar to "Through the Looking Glass."

A remarkably satisfying—but not at all satiating—instrumental collection is "An All-Star Tribute to Tatum" (American Recording Society ARS G 424). The first side, six numbers, present Tatum alone, an experience that can be equivalent to hearing two pianists simultaneously. I happen to agree at times with the protestants who are quoted in the notes as believing that Tatum occasionally was "if anything overly inventive . . . he did not filter out enough of the less-inspired matter." But withal, he was such a whirringly stimulating virtuoso and had so hypnotically complex a time sense that there is usually much to discover and rediscover in a Tatum performance. The second side illuminates Tatum in various contexts with such of the jazz nobility as Roy Eldridge, Jo Jones, Benny Carter, and Ben Webster.

THE positive aspects of the "liberation" of the jazz guitar are celebrated in albums by two other musicians who manage to combine a fresh, personal conception with deeply swinging time and a sound, all things

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## THE AMEN CORNER

### Results, Fellows!

THIS department's recent jazz quiz generated a degree of excitement which suggested a quiet night in a swamp, but it did lead to one powerful result. My learned correspondent Mr. Jerome Shipman of Auburndale, Massachusetts, challenges my impression that the first recorded example of the syllables "be-bop" occurred on the 1928 release of "Four or Five Times" by McKinney's Cotton Pickers. He deposes that the word is to be heard in Louis Armstrong's "Hotter Than That" which, Mr. Shipman says, was recorded on December 13, 1927. Mr. Shipman's ear is certainly accurate, and if his dates are equally so he has established his case. I have not gone into the moil of scholarship to look these matters up myself, but if I know anything about Mr. Shipman, and I think I do, he will be a stiff man to refute. Armstrong's pronunciation of "be-bop" is invigorating, to say the least, and I would like at this time to suggest the possibility that any syncopated scat singer, embarking on a passage dominated by the leading consonant "b" will be likely to arrive at "be-bop" automatically. It seems to me, indeed, that it would be hard to avoid.

It is, of course, a considerable irony that Armstrong should be in this position, in view of his frequently emphasized scorn for the be-bop school of jazz. That school has now enriched the main stream for the better part of a decade, and I am always baffled to find how many excellent musicians of the older tradition are repelled by the bebop influence. No one expects Aunt Maude, mooning away over her Chopin, to come to the support of Charlie Parker, but when a fine, inventive musical spirit can take in the best of jazz, New Orleans, Chicago and New York, up to 1940, it is difficult to understand why he cannot make the leap to, say, 1950. After that, it is easy. I am inclined to think that the reason may be, simply, lack of extended hearing. I know that it took me some time to cross the gap, but the record reviewer is obliged to listen, whether he wishes to or not, and since he is further obliged to say what he thinks, he will do his subject matter the honor of repeated audition. I have found it especially useful, in coming to terms with strange music of various sorts, to play it while occupied with something else, such as shaving or making plans for a week-end at Ballston Spa. One is suddenly apt to realize that the fellow with the flute or the valve trombone is bringing off some pretty charming material.

With this preamble, I suggest several discs strongly suffused with bop and, for me, musical attraction. There is "Six Pieces of Silver" with Horace Silver at the piano; Donald Byrd, trumpet; Hank Mobley, tenor sax; Doug Watkins, bass; Louis Hayes, drums. As the title implies, six of the tunes are Silver originals, and there is any amount of combined crispness and ease, much polyrhythmic attraction. Fine dry wine, in short (Blue Note 1539). Now eliminate that splendid trumpet, Byrd, place Art Blakey at the drums, and add Milt Jackson on the vibraphone, and you have "Hank Mobley and His All Stars" who will continue the wine pressing with five Mobley originals (Blue Note 1544). We are here in the thick of the current New York activity—young men who are self-conscious about their work, but who retain the fine improvisatory spirit and thoroughly beguile the accustomed ear.

NO ONE has been more delicately venturesome in modern jazz than the alto saxophonist Lee Konitz, unless it be his friend the pianist Lennie Tristano. Konitz has done a great deal of musical cerebration; he seems to have gotten a good deal of dry analysis out of his system, and he is a pleasure to hear in "Lee Konitz Inside Hi-Fi" (Atlantic 1258) with rhythmic support and the lovely interplay of Billy Bauer's guitar. Konitz also assumes the tenor saxophone in certain passages; he says he enjoyed it, and I should think he would have. If I were pressed to the wall in one of those horrid demands for dogma which now and then are asked of us, I would name Billy Bauer as my favorite jazz guitarist. He is an exceedingly subtle and elaborate operator, and, apart from his degree of talent, I prefer a much simpler approach to the instrument—more chording and less linear fancy. The new man for me is Kenny Burrell (Blue Note 1543) who retains the flavor of the barrel house and never sounds like a television studio guitarist on a Bartok jag. Burrell performs this feat in many moods, one of the most striking a four o'clock in the morning impression of the classic "Moten Swing"—the tempo is a bit slower than usual, and hypnotic.

Gerry Mulligan is back with his elegant quartet, the leader's baritone saxophone poised against the fluent valve trombone of Bob Brookmeyer, with Bill Crow, bass, and Dave Bailey, drums. I suppose this might be called the dead (or rather alive) center of modern jazz. It faces both ways, with complete success, and takes on such themes as "Baubles, Bangles and Beads" from the operetta "Kismet." (Pacific Jazz PJ-1228.) I cannot forbear to mention here that while "Kismet" is drawn from the music of Alexander Borodin, there is not a single mention on this disc of the great Russian's name.

Our English cousins have sent us a musical salute to the estimable beers of Albion, "Pub Crawling with Jimmy Deuchar" (Contemporary C3529). The tunes are named for the beers in question—"IPA Special," "Colne Springs," "E," "Treble Gold," "Bass House" and "Final Selection." The nearest approach I have made to this roster is Bass ale; in any event, Mr. Deuchar's excellently free and easy modern jazz is Empire salesmanship of the first order, his own trumpet blends most effectively with Derek Humble, alto and baritone saxes; Tubby Hayes, tenor sax; Ken Wray, trombone; Victor Feldman, piano; Lennie Bush, bass; and Phil Seamen, drums. Mr. Deuchar composed and arranged the entire program, and is welcome at any time to hoist his awning in my back yard. Case goods included.

My sins of omission include no previous tribute to the New York café singer and pianist, Bobby Short. He is such a buttress of the temples of chi-chi that he has probably not noted my lapse. He is also a musical artist of impeccable wit, grace, rhythm and flourish. To my knowledge, he has made the finest recording of "Bye Bye Blackbird" ever pressed (Atlantic 1230), his "Sand In My Shoes" in the same album is a popular masterpiece, and his "At Long Last Love" in a later waxing (Atlantic 1262) must be the kind of thing Cole Porter dreams of.

—WILDER HOBSON.

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# Recordings in Review

## Omnibus Espagnol

GURIDI: *"Ten Basque Dances."* ALBENIZ: *"Navarra."* TURINA: *"La Procession del Rocio," "La Oracion del Torero." Ataulfo Argenta conducting the Orquesta Nacional de España.* London LL 1585, $3.98. RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF: *"Capriccio Espagnol."* GRANADOS: *"Andalusia."* CHABRIER: *"España," and* MOSZKOWSKI: *Spanish Dances (Nos. 1-5). Argenta conducting the London Symphony Orchestra.* London LL 1682, $3.98. FALLA: *"Three Cornered Hat."* TURINA: *"Sinfonia Sevillana." Argenta conducting the Orquesta Nacional.* London LL 1688, $3.98. GIMÉNEZ: *"La Torre del Oro" (Intermezzo) "El Baile de Luis Alonso" (Intermezzo), "La Boda de Luis Alonso" (Intermezzo).* CHAPÍ: *"El Tambor de Granaderos" (Prelude), "La Revoltosa" (Prelude).* GRANADOS: *"Goyescas" (Intermezzo).* LUNA: *"La Picara Molinera," and* BRÉTON: *"La Dolores" (Jota). Argenta conducting the Orquesta de Camera de Madrid.* London LL 1689, $3.98.

**FOR THOSE TO** whom the music of Spain is as much a special taste as black olives or tarragon vinegar the appearance of these four discs will be enough to keep them provided with their favorite fare for months to come. For others—poor souls—who can take it or leave it, one might paraphrase the ancients' advice on wine, "take a little, for thy mind's sake."

As Argenta has long since established himself as the day's finest conductor of the authentic Spanish music—his recordings of Turina's "Danzas Fantasticas" and Falla's "Three-Cornered Hat" left no doubt of that—the omnibus issue has the special interest of showing his orientation to the synthetic kind of Rimsky, Chabrier, even, save the marquis, Moszkowski. To my taste, the mixture of ingredients is so well-balanced, the taste of the conductor so consistently appealing that a treatment of Debussy's "Iberia" would seem in order forthwith (an inquiry revealed that is a current project for Argenta). To put it in more musical terms: he does not share the view—being a Spaniard himself—that it is an "exotic" idiom, hence he does not have to make the castanets in Rimsky rattle ominously, or the dance rhythms jangle. The percussion is bumped lightly, not banged; the strings are caressed, not scraped, the winds not overblown. It is of special interest that he does these things not with an orchestra of natives, but with the English gentry of the London Symphony.

So far as the numerous other items are concerned, Argenta is as good as the material permits him to be. That is to say, in such a consistently fine score as Falla's "Three-Cornered Hat" (a brand-new performance, incidentally, not a reissue) he is consistently vital and rewarding, also in "La Oraçion del Torero." The "Sinfonia Sevillana" being a less consistent piece, he sometimes loses our interest, but where Turina permits it is lively listening. Likewise the "Basque Dances" of Guridi, which are of variable quality.

For those to whom the *zarzuela* is still a closed book, the disc of intermezzi mainly drawn from them (the works of Bréton and Granados are more properly operas) should form a provocative introduction. Abundant in melodic appeal, colorfully orchestrated and, of course, performed with distinction, they have something of their own to offer the listening ear. London is to be congratulated on the project, and the fine-sounding way in which it has been realized.

## Post-"New World" Dvorak

DVORAK: *Quartet in A flat, opus 105. Janáček Quartet.* Decca DL 9919, $3.98.

**THOUGH IT IS** the common impression that Dvorak wrote no music of consequence after those products of his "late" years, the E minor ("New World") Symphony and the F major ("American" or "Nigger") quartet, this is not quite the case. There is, for example, this fine quartet, begun in New York in 1895 but not completed until after his return to Prague and his resumption of work at the Conservatory there in the fall. It is replete with suggestions that he felt himself liberated, at last, from a trying experience, happy enough to exchange the "new world" for the old.

In addition to its stream of sentiment, the warmth and freshness of the melodic material, it is a superb piece of chamber-music writing. A string player himself, Dvorak had not only written a dozen published chamber-music works by 1895, but probably as many more that were not published. The mastery of the writing is implicit in the rich, natural texture from first to last, but especially apparent in the closely stranded lento.

No little of the delight conveyed by this work relates to the playing of the Janáček Quartet which, being composed of men named Jiri Trávincek, Adolf Sykora, Jiri Kratochvíl (viola), and Karel Krafka, has a pungent native feeling for it. But they are also individuals of high technical skills and an ensemble to compare with any in the world today.

## Court of the Waltz King

WALDTEUFEL: *"Les Patineurs," "Mon Rêve," "Estudiantina," "Grenadiers," "Pomone," and "España." Henry Krips conducting the Philharmonica Promenade Orchestra.* Angel 35426, $4.98.

LEHAR: *"Gold and Silver."* WALDTEUFEL: *"Les Patineurs."* IVANOVICI: *"Waves of the Danube."* ZIEHRER: *"Vienna Maidens."* ROSAS: *"Over the Waves."* WALDTEUFEL: *"Ganz allerliebst."* FETRAS: *"Moonlight on the Alster."* ZIEHRER: *"Hereinspaziert." Anton Paulik conducting the Volksoper Orchestra.* Vanguard VRS 1002, $4.98.

**IF JOHANN STRAUSS, JR.** is truly the waltz king—a designation universally accepted—then there must be a court surrounding him, with its lines of descent and a peerage of the realm. Here in this collection of Waldteufel and the non-Strauss Viennese we see that there are those of the blood royal, and others who are merely petty princes, if at all above the status of commoner—which, in this particular realm, is no mean station at that.

Certainly Waldteufel is a loyal subject who, in a long life (1837-1915), devised a few innovations of his own. Such was the paraphrase of Chabrier's "España" which owes virtually all of its content to the original, though the adaptation of it to waltz style is ingenious. As for "Les Patineurs" ("The Skaters") and "Estudiantina," they are so famous that many people don't even know they have names. Krips (the younger brother of Josef) has a lively sense of style, especially in the pacing of the introductions and conclusions which are ambitiously Straussian.

For that matter, the revered master rarely wrote a better waltz than (Archduke Franz) Lehar's "Gold and Silver," an orchestral coin he minted perhaps just to show that he could do it more often if he weren't devoting his major efforts to operettas. Ivanovici's "Waves of the Danube" and Rosa's "Over the Waves" have rarely been given such considerate treatment as Paulik accords them, and they respond with almost audible contentment. The treatment is also

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considerate in "Vienna Maidens" (complete with whistling ensemble) "Moonlight on the Alster" and "Strolling in," but this is rather small change, musically. Fine sound in each, with rather more color of locality in the excellent Viennese ensemble under Paulik.

### Callas-di Stefano "Ballo"

VERDI: *"Un Ballo in Maschera." Giuseppe di Stefano, Maria Meneghini Callas, Tito Gobbi, Fedora Barbieri, and Eugenia Ratti with Antonino Votto conducting the orchestra and chorus of La Scala.* Angel 35351-2-3, $15.94.

**IN THE WAKE** of the discussion entitled "Maria, Renata, and Zinka," several well-intentioned correspondents suggested a similar conversation-piece, with a male accent, to be called "Giuseppe, Jussi, and Mario" (to keep the whole thing severely alphabetical). This would hardly be just to Jan, Richard, and Nicolai (Gedda) among a variety of other tenors that could be mentioned, for the distinctions that make matching the matchless ladies attractive hardly exist among the men, good as they are in their several ways.

However, the vocalizing of di Stefano here shows that if he would give up straining himself with such unsuitable roles as Turiddu in "Cavalleria" or Mario in "Tosca," or his recent Manrico in "Trovatore," he could be outstanding in the characteristic Verdi roles. My admiration for Peerce's Riccardo in the Toscanini "Ballo" doesn't leave me less aware that his voice, now, is rather dark and throaty for the part, that di Stefano has more freedom, a lighter touch for "Di' tu se fedele," among other things.

Indeed, when di Stefano and Callas are engaged in their more than occasional duets this is worthy of the choice phrase *bel canto*, thanks perhaps to Votto's fine sense of orchestral sonority, his ability to support the singers without abdicating leadership. The Amelia of Callas has fine line, dramatic distinction, and a full supply of her own kind of vocal coloration, which I find appealing as well as suitable to the role, her way of phrasing such a sequence as "Consentimi, o Signore, virtù ch'io lavi il core" ravishing.

For the rest, however, qualifications are more appropriate than commendations. Barbieri's quaver offsets aural pleasure in the authority she imparts to Ulrica, Gobbi's dry voice limits enjoyment, and Ratti's is too much the wiry, pinpoint Oscar of convention. —IRVING KOLODIN.

# THE ART OF THE SONG

By WINIFRED CECIL

A CURRENT collection of records by an array of prominent singers illustrates the pitfalls that lie in the way of the opera star who would also sing songs. If one wants evidence of the formidable difficulty of the transition, one needs only count the number of singers who have been equally successful in both mediums.

London has issued two recordings of arias and songs by Lisa Della Casa. The first (London, LL-1576) offers Miss Della Casa in five familiar Mozart arias and excerpts from Handel's "Julius Caesar." Accompaniments are provided by the Vienna Philharmonic under the direction of four well-known conductors. Obviously, the recordings were made over a period of time and under varying conditions.

Pleasant though Miss Della Casa's Mozart is, I don't find it moving. The two Donna Elvira arias ("Don Giovanni") under Josef Krips are quite lovely, but "Dove sono" ("Figaro") is too cool and dry for this reviewer's taste. Mozart's Countess could never have been so bored. The five Handel selections, however, are a quite different experience. Under the direction of Heinrich Hollreiser, the soprano sings the Handel with an undercurrent of excitement, technical assurance (aside from a peculiar scooping habit) and beauty of tone that are exemplary. Particularly in "Weine nur, klage nur," she comes alive as this reviewer has never heard her elsewhere. What brings this metamorphosis about? Conductor, artist herself, orchestra? Or is it the combination of all three?

Why is it that Miss Della Casa can sing Handel so effectively and then in her singing of lieder leave so much to be desired? In her performances of the songs of Schubert, Brahms, Wolf, and Strauss (London, LL-1535) Miss Della Casa's naturally appealing voice is too often undisciplined. The notable want of overtone throughout is distressing, and the repeated scooping, apparent only occasionally in the arias, becomes unpardonable. One senses that the singer tries too hard to make an effect and, in so doing, loses the innate feeling necessary for a first-class recital.

Let us take, for example, "Gretchen am Spinnrade," as it is sung here. Surely one of the great songs in the literature, "Gretchen" must be interpreted with profound understanding and the most secure technique. Curiously, it is only in this song that Miss Della Casa seems to rise above the monotony of tempo and concept that prevail in her Schubert group. Is this because the drama inherent in the song suggests the kind of singing to which Miss Della Casa is more accustomed on the opera stage? We hardly hear the best of the singer again until, much farther along, we come to Wolf's "Geh', Geliebter," a song which she must like to sing. Here, for the first time in this entire lieder program, Miss Della Casa displays the artistry, apparently hidden hitherto, which the Handel arias demonstrate that she does possess. One wishes that the whole recital might have been sung with the confidence and abandon of this one song.

Another opera singer giving her first recorded song recital is Renata

Hilda Gueden—"bell-like sound."

Lisa Della Casa—"confidence, abandon."

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# Recordings Reports I: Orchestral LPs

| WORK, PERFORMER, DATA | REPORT |
|---|---|
| Arnold: "Homage to the Queen." Robert Irving conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra. RCA Victor LM 2037, $3.98. | This always skilful and sometimes attractive score for a Sadler's Wells (now Royal) Ballet production of the Coronation Year has some listening lapses, in the episodes devoted to stage spectacle alone, but it is a desirable addition to the ballet literature. Given a subject of a less ceremonious nature, Arnold might well write a score of real quality, combining technical skills with a feeling for the idiom. Excellent performance and reproduction. |
| Brahms: Symphony No. 3. Eugen Jochum conducting the Berlin Philharmonic. "Tragic" overture. The same, Fritz Lehmann conducting. Decca DL 9899, $3.98. | The emerging image of Jochum is provided with a few more details in this strongly formed, finely paced performance, suggesting a conductor in the mold of Pfitzner or Abendroth. Along with a firm sense of phrase goes an ability to let the key players in the orchestra have their own say on Brahms. Lehmann's direction of the "Tragic" is of lesser dimensions, but it is also well played. |
| Britten: "Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra." Dohnanyi: "Variations on a Nursery Tune." Felix Slatkin conducting the Concert Arts Symphony Orchestra, with Victor Aller, piano. Capitol P 8373, $3.98. | Without feeling the need to take the customer into the kitchen to observe the dish being prepared (as was done, at the length of a full side, in Westminster's Boult-directed version on XWN 18372), Slatkin has served a tasty measure of Britten, well seasoned with a good garnish of tonal fidelity. He is also successful in his treatment of Dohnanyi, giving Aller a suitable opportunity to develop his personal conception. |
| Elgar: Symphony No. 2 in E flat. Sir Adrian Boult conducting. Westminster XWN 18378, $3.98. | There is some typically Elgarian eloquence in this score, but not more and much less concentrated than in the briefer, better realized "Variations on an Original Theme" ("Enigma"). I would not question Boult's knowledge of the work, or his devotion to it, but the performance sounds insufficiently rehearsed, not all of the strands of sounds aligned in the same direction to make a cohesive texture. It could, for that matter, be a factor of the writing itself; for whatever reason, the aural impression is not a persuasive one. As reproduction of sound, it takes a place among Westminster's best. |
| Hindemith: "Mathis der Maler." Toch: Symphony No. 3. William Steinberg conducting the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. Capitol P 8364, $3.98. | Two outstanding performances by Steinberg, reproduced with a clarity and tonal adjustment that outdo any previous accomplishment by Capitol in Pittsburgh. Steinberg's penetration of Hindemith's most satisfying score is total, though his sense of sonorities results in something leaner, more linear, than in the composer's own direction of it. Toch's ambitious work has a strong animating purpose, but its length outruns its ideas, the style becoming rhetorical without commanding the eloquence to match its Mahlerian pretentions. |
| Puccini: "Turandot." Domenico Savino conducting the Rome Symphony Orchestra. Kapp LCL 9000, $3.98. | A voiceless version of highspots of Puccini's last score makes more sense in this instance than is customarily the case (as in the coincidental release of similar treatment of "Cavalleria" and "Forza del Destino"), for the orchestral scoring is brilliant, the voices less conspicuously absent. However Savino's estimate of the situation is rather on the surface, the tonal qualities of the orchestra a little distorted to make the highs sound impressive. |
| Rachmaninoff: Symphony No. 2 in E minor, opus 27. State Radio Orchestra of the U.S.S.R. conducted by Alexander Gauk. Westminster XWN 18424, $3.98. | A performance much in the manner of the one by the Leningrad Symphony (Sanderling conducting) issued from German-made tapes on the Decca label last winter, which is to say that the effects are broad, the timbre of such instruments as French horn, clarinet and oboe rather different than that to which we are accustomed, the total effort in a broader, less hectic spirit than is usual in this country. As sound, it is not as good as the Decca version. |
| Strauss, R: "Don Juan," "Tile Eulen-Baron" overtures, "Tales from the Vienna Woods," "Blue Danube," waltzes, "Annen" and "Pizzicato" polkas, "Perpetuum Mobile" and "Radetzky March." Sir John Barbirolli conducting the Halle Orchestra. Mercury MG 50124, $3.98. | Barbirolli knows the Strauss style and the Hallé is a fine orchestra, but climaxes are regularly overproduced for the sake of orchestral effects disproportionate to the needs of the music, the "style" applied from the outside rather than permeating the total effort (especially in the waltzes). Altogether if Viennese music is available, why settle for the Mancunian approximation? Good reproduction in a rather boomy style. The occasional grunts from the conductor are hardly aesthetically appealing. |
| Strauss, R: "Don Juan," "Till Eulenspiegel," "Rosenkavalier" waltzes and "Feuersnot" love scene. Eugene Ormandy conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra. Columbia ML 5177, $3.98. | The playing of the opera excerpts appeals more than those of the tone poems, the latter having more to do with the virtuosi of the Philadelphia Orchestra than to the virtuosity of Strauss. Brilliant, unquestionably, but with a bulldozer drive that tends to level off niceties of detail in a pursuit of dynamics extremes, especially in the percussion. The "Feuersnot" excerpt, for those not acquainted with it, is an exercise in Strauss's most lavalike tonal flow, given a properly volcanic treatment by orchestra and conductor. |
| Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 6 in B minor. Ernest Ansermet conducting the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. London LL 1633, $3.98. | A really superlative recording, matching a profoundly personal statement of the score by Ansermet with a highly judicious, well balanced concept of fine orchestral reproduction. The end product, if not immediately ear-shattering, stands the test of repetition which a recording must endure. Ansermet's Tchaikovsky is not shredded and tattered and rather ragged by result, but clearheaded and convincing. A notable accomplishment. |
| Tchaikovsky: "Aurora's Wedding" and "Black Swan" pas des deux ("Swan Lake"). Antal Dorati conducting the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra. Mercury MG 50118, $3.98. | As is well known, Dorati's background in the ballet is substantial, but his attention to power to the detriment of poetry tends to put their qualities in a perspective not intended by Tchaikovsky. Efficient recording as Mercury conceives it, a little lacking in sheen and resonance for my taste. However it gives the orchestra all its decibelic due. |
| Tchaikovsky: "Nutcracker" suite, Chabrier: "España," Ponchielli: "Dance of the Hours," and Suppé: "Morning, Noon and Night in Vienna." Sir Thomas Beecham conducting the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Columbia ML 5171, $3.98. | For all save the "Nutcracker" this is a second or third time around for these works in Beecham performances which have lost no whit of freshness, zest or artistic interest. The "Dance of the Hours" can be challenged only by the Toscanini, which is electric rather than mercurial, the "España" is on a par with Ansermet's, the Suppé in a class by itself. However I find the Tchaikovsky suite a little over-refined and, even, sluggish, without the sportive overtones of the sense of fantasy imparted by Stokowski, for one. Satisfying sound throughout, without overt striving for effect. —IRVING KOLODIN. |

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Tebaldi (London, LL-1571). To many who think of Miss Tebaldi only as a prima donna of the opera stage, this record will come as a revelation, fortunately, a happy one. As a program of songs, sensitively accompanied by Giorgio Favaretto, the recording always holds interest. Ravishing beauty of tone and a consistent excitement and verve in the voice itself never fail to come through to the listener. Most of the songs are a delight. A possible exception is Alessandro Scarlatti's "Le violette," in the opinion of many a very fragile song, which is executed in a rather heavy manner, more as an operatic aria than as a puff of confection. But, before one has a chance to become too exacting, there is Rossini's "La promessa," which Tebaldi imbues with such urgency that she leaves the listener breathless and waiting for more. Even though what we might call the standard interpretation of this song is light and lyric, this reviewer finds Miss Tebaldi's performance memorable. It would probably be too much to say that Miss Tebaldi has changed our conception of how the song should be sung, but it is not too much to say that in at least one mind she has challenged tradition, and for the better. Three Martucci songs, hardly of significant musical quality, are sung so beautifully that they acquire an importance which they lack intrinsically. Such ability to transmute music is the proof of an artist. While it may be that Miss Tebaldi is aware of her limitations in the concert field and here sings only what she knows she does best (all-Italian), the result is still rewarding, for she has been able to transfer her exquisite *bel canto* from the opera setting to the recorded medium in an exceptionally beautiful recital of songs.

IN still another recording, we have an opportunity to hear Hilde Gueden in a recital of Richard Strauss lieder (London, LL-1591). Miss Gueden's singing and the recording itself are superior. Moreover, the singer has the good fortune to have as accompanist one of today's most talented young pianists, Friedrich Gulda. "Schlechtes Wetter" is sung and played as Strauss himself must have wished it. "Wie sollten wir geheim sie halten," one of the most difficult of songs, is performed with great elan and beauty of tone. Yet, for some reason, when she is called upon to sing quietly, Miss Gueden thinks that the tone production must change. Why? When she does this, she makes a thin white sound which takes away all beauty of the voice itself. Or, as in "Die Nacht," a harsh chest tone, quite foreign to the vocal line, suddenly mars one's pleasure. "Befreit" is an example of vocalization peculiarly Miss Gueden's. She slides tentatively into a note *in alt* as if she feared for its focus. But, having arrived, she lets her voice go until it swells into a bell-like sound that is glorious to hear. Is this mannerism a carry-over from the opera stage where it is less obvious; or is it due to a lack of experience in meeting the demands of recital singing? In spite of these reservations, this record, including as it does an engaging variety of thirteen Strauss songs, all of them well-interpreted by the happy combination of Miss Gueden and Mr. Gulda, deserves a place in the library.

To add to the wealth of song recitals we are offered two more records by Kirsten Flagstad: a Bach and Handel recital, sung in English (London, LL-1641) and a Grieg recital (London, LL-1547). Mme. Flagstad's voice is always warm, sumptuous, and thrilling, and brings a real richness to the Bach and Handel melodies. There will, however, be two opinions about this recording. For those to whom sound is all in all, it will be a source of lasting pleasure, even of wonder. On the other hand, those who


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# Recordings Reports II: Miscellaneous LPs

| WORK, PERFORMER, DATA | REPORT |
|---|---|
| Bartok: Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion. Wilfrid Parry and Iris Loveridge, pianos, Gilbert Webster and Jack Lees, percussion, with Richard Austin directing. "Contrasts" Parry, Frederick Grinke, violin, and Jack Brymer, clarinet. Westminster XWN 18425, $3.98. | A suitable paring of complementary works, with a particular success in the sonata, which has a range of rhythmic and coloristic effects that the jazz people might investigate to advantage. The performance is well-prepared, the sound qualities keenly presented. "Contrasts," however, another story, for the playing lacks the bite and humor of the original by Goodman, Szigeti, and Bartok, providing instead a kind of fuzzy, rough textured sound that doesn't add to much that is pleasurable, aurally. |
| Bizet: "Carmen," with Geraldine Farrar, soprano, Giovanni Martinelli, tenor, Pasquale Amato, etc. Camden CAL 359, $1.98. | RCA has extended the bargain principle a little too far, it seems to me, in offering this compilation of "Carmen" material by the favorite soprano without so much as a sequence of excerpts, dates of recording, etc. Allowing for the acoustic techniques of the 1910-1920 period, she is represented in favorable vocal form, though many of the ritards, accentuations, and phrasings now seem more than a little quaint. Miss Farrar is also presented as singer of Micaëla's "Je dis que rien m'epouvante." |
| Brahms: Fantasias, Op. 116, Capricci and Intermezzi, Op. 76. Daniel Wayenberg, piano. Ducretet-Thomson DTL 93059, $3.98. | The favorable impression Wayenberg made some months ago with a Ravel collection is, unfortunately, not strengthened by this effort. It is able, orderly playing, but more than a little dull and lacking in vitality, which is a special misfortune in an aspect of Brahms not overly provided with interest by the composer. |
| Britten: "Les Illuminations" and Ravel: "Shéhérazade." Janine Micheau, soprano, Paul Sacher and Jean Fournet conducting the Lamoureux Orchestra. Debussy: "Trois Ballades de François Villon," Ravel: "Don Quichotte a Dulcinee." Camille Maurane, baritone, with Fournet conducting. Epic LC 3355, $3.98. | The works are nicely mated for similar musical tastes, and all are well performed if not, in every case, as well as in the best previous versions. Micheau's qualities are familiar ones, her refinement and taste being offset somewhat by a little lack of color in the voice. Maurane may be unknown save to those who have noted his name in a Fauré "Requiem" or Rameau's "Les Indes galantes," but he is a perceptive artist, with a malleable voice and excellent vocal technique. Not yet of the Bernac mold, he has some attributes which may eventually enable him to qualify. |
| Busoni: Sonata No. 2 in E minor. Max Rostal, violin, and Noel Mewton-Wood, piano. Westminster WXN 18426, $3.98. | This gargantuan work (its six movements cover both sides of the LP) has more than a little of everything in it, but mostly Brahms and Richard Strauss. The inadequate notes fail to identify the time of composition, but its view is almost defiantly retrospective. Much of it is enjoyable if lacking individuality, but the final contrapuntal movement (a kind of Cesarian—Franck—operation) attains a staggering volume of complexity unrelieved by self-evaluation. The players have the work under firm control at all times, the late Mewton-Wood again giving us cause to regret his early death. |
| Debussy: "Preludes." Albert Ferber, piano. Ducretet-Thomson DTL 93116, 93117, $3.98. | Evaluation of the capacities of a player in such evocative literature as this from discs alone is more than an ordinary challenge, but one which Ferber makes inviting. He has a suitable array of the qualifications required for Debussy, though he sometimes overstresses his tone with percussive, metallic results. But he is a player of much strength and some imagination. Good piano reproduction. |
| Dvorak: Serenade in E (Op. 22) Vaughan Williams: Fantasia on "Greensleeves"; "Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis." Boyd Neel String Orchestra. Unicorn UNLP 1044, $3.98. | Typically polished, well-disciplined performances under the direction of Neel, though in no case does he probe far below the music's surface or illuminate substance as well as externals. In compensation for this lack of profundity the listener is offered a steady flow of solid musical sense and no incursions of "interpretative" nonsense. The sound is very good. |
| Elgar: Serenade in E minor. Brahms: Liebeslieder Waltzes, Grieg: "In the Popular Style," Dvorak: Nocturne in B. Cedric Dumont conducting the Boyd Neel Orchestra. Epic LC 3350, $3.98. | Something for every taste here, even if not everything on it is to all tastes. Dumont directs the Elgar expressively and the orchestra responds well throughout, though the sweeping string effects in the Brahms are excessive for ears accustomed to the crisper sound of the pianos (and voices) for which the waltzes were written. Included are Nos. 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, and 9. |
| Rossini: "Cenerentola" ("Miei rampolli femmini"), etc. Fernando Corena, basso. Gianandrea Gavazzeni conducting the orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino. London LL 1636, $3.98. | A broad range of buffo specialities, including "Ho un gran peso sulla testa" from "L'Italiana in Algeri," "Sia qualunque delle figlie" from "Cenerentola," and "Udite udite" from Cimarosa's "Matrimonio Segreto" on the Italian side, and excerpts from Massenet's "Griselidis," Thomas's "Le Caid" (Air du Tambour-Major), Gounod's "Philemon et Baucis" ("Vulcan's Song") and "Piff-paff-puff" from Offenbach's "Grande Duchesse" on a French side directed by James Walker. Lively work by Corena all through. |
| Schumann: Variations on a Theme by Clara Wieck. Chopin: B flat minor Mazurka and Polonaise-Fantasie, Haydn: Sonata in E flat, Scarlatti: Sonata in E, etc. Vladimir Horowitz, piano. RCA Victor LM 1957, $3.98. | To judge from its number, this should be the RCA Victor record of the year which, while good, it does not quite become. Horowitz is represented by a wide variety of excerpts from public performances, all informed, thereby, with a kind of aliveness not always heard in studio performances. The variation in quality is considerable with the rarely heard Schumann variations and the two Chopin pieces delivered with artistic fervor and tonal grandeur, the Haydn sonata and the Scarlatti rather picked at, as if the pianist didn't have a real appetite for them. Amongst other things (*Brahms Intermezzo in E flat*, and Moszkowski "Etincelles") is a dazzling dash through Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever" in which the pianist provides his own rockets and pinwheels for 4th of July purposes. Good sound. |
| Strauss: Excerpts from "Spitzentuch der Königin," and other operettas. Hansgeorg Otto conducting, with Sonja Schoner and Herbert Ernst Groh, vocalists. Telefunken LGX 66046, $4.98. | The formula is a familiar one, but along with the lusty chorus and soloists is an uncommonly attractive assemblage of operetta excerpts, with only brief allusions to "Fledermaus" and "Zigeunerbaron." Among the others are "Tausend und eine Nacht," "Der Lustige Krieg," "Wiener Blut," "Blindekuh," "Waldmeister," etc. It is a little late in the day for tenor Groh, but he has the manner, certainly. Side II is devoted to a medley of Viennese songs in a popular vein. |
| Waxman: "Sinfonietta for String Orchestra and Timpani." Foss: Concerto for Piano. Both conducted by Franz Waxman. Decca DL 9889, $3.98. | Two works of uncommon appeal, provided with an authentic interpretation through the participation of the composer in both (Foss is his own soloist). The Waxman "Sinfonietta" is lively and well written, the Foss a little overstated. —I. K. |

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have been reared in the classic style of oratorio, particularly in the school of the two masters, will be compelled to choose between the new sound and the old tradition. The London Philharmonic under Sir Adrian Boult plays uninspired accompaniments.

In the Grieg recital, Mme. Flagstad is at home, singing songs of her native land in her native tongue. What she does here is almost legendary. The warm communication is the same as it was when she began to make these songs standard fare to American audiences twenty years ago. For many, Mme. Flagstad is as closely identified with these Grieg songs as she is with Wagner. Edwin MacArthur plays the piano accompaniments expertly.

Schumann's "Liederkreis" and Faure's "La bonne chanson" have been newly recorded by Suzanne Danco (London, LL-1234). Although this artist has acquired a certain following for her interpretative gifts, her singing of the Schumann cycle wants distinction and, for this listener, cannot take the place, for example, of Westminster's recording by Sena Jurinac. In "La bonne chanson," Miss Danco makes a better impression, it may be, because she is more comfortable in the French language.

THE last, but by not means the least enjoyable, of these new issues from London is a recital of Gounod songs and old French airs by Gerard Souzay (London, LL-1530). Mr. Souzay uses his somewhat limited vocal resources to utmost advantage. He has style, good technique and, what is most important, the ability to make the most of whatever he sings.

It is interesting to observe how an artist who has done only a moderate amount of opera singing and has concentrated more on songs (*e. g.*, Souzay) can win an audience, even through the medium of a recording, more easily than those with greater vocal wealth when they are removed from what we might call their natural habitat. Unquestionably, all the artists who have made these recordings are distinguished in the opera world. Yet, when they are obliged to put technique, style, intelligence, understanding, and voice itself to the service of recital music alone, without the trappings of the stage to support them, few come off as well as we wish or expect.

A thrilling voice may be enough to hold an audience spellbound. A great interpretation, even with fewer vocal riches, may do the same. If the combination must be rare, why is it so? We have had it in the past. Why not more often today? More experience, more recordings, may provide the answer.

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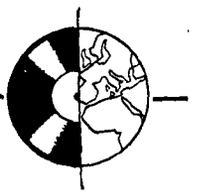

## ENGLAND'S IMPORT—EXPORT BALANCE

THE LARGER record companies have been buzzing with activity during the past month and by no means the least important event has been the first independent release of RCA discs, launched in association with Decca. The occasion was marked by a convention of record dealers organized by Decca, in the course of which the new label was "unveiled" with due ceremony, although the attempt to canalize supplies of RCA records by means of a "star dealer system" turned out to be no more than a damp squib. The first list—a comparatively modest affair—includes Toscanini's performance of "Aida," Beethoven Sonatas played by Horowitz and Rubinstein, a rather ungracious version of the "Pastoral" Symphony (Boston/Münch), some gorgeous fiddling by Heifetz (Rozsa, Spohr, and Tchaikovsky), and a brilliantly recorded pair of Strauss tone-poems (Vienna Philharmonic under Reiner).

By way of counterblast, EMI have at last decided to exploit the classical catalogue of its subsidiary, Capitol, a sector which has been utterly neglected ever since the American company became attached to the Hayes fraternity. Rather surprising, because everyone (not excepting this writer) believed HMV's April list to be its final fling in this direction, has been the continued emergence of Victor recordings under the old, familiar label. Thus HMV's "Treasury" series has been enriched by Rachmaninov's performance of his C minor Concerto and by the Heifetz/Toscanini version of the Beethoven Concerto.

Nor has HMV overlooked the Elgar centenary: there are new versions of the Second Symphony and the "Introduction and Allegro," both played by the Hallé Orchestra under Barbirolli, and the June list contains three LP discs devoted to the Violin Concerto, the Enigma Variations, the Serenade, the Overture "Cockaigne," and the tone-poem "Falstaff" (probably Elgar's masterpiece), in the performances conducted by the composer, with "Master" Yehudi Menuhin as soloist in the Concerto, first issued years ago. Other interesting additions to the repertoire from this quarter include Britten's early Piano Concerto (Jacques Abram) coupled with Rawsthorne's delightful 1st Concerto (Moura Lympany); Scriabin's "Poème d'Extase" and "Rêverie," backed by Arbos's orchestral version of Albeniz's "Iberia" (Philharmonic/Goossens); and a disc containing concertos for three and four harpsichords by Bach and Vivaldi together with a delightful pastiche by George Malcolm, his "Variations on a Theme by Mozart" for four harpsichords.

The latest Decca releases enable us to examine diverse aspects of Benjamin Britten's prodigious gifts in presenting him successively as composer-conductor, pianist-conductor, and just plain conductor. The first of these definitions refers to a pair of discs containing his most recent major work, "The Prince of the Pagodas"—a clever ballet-score, if not among his most convincing creations—admirably played by the Covent Garden Orchestra and stunningly recorded. The other two discs involving Britten contain performances recorded at last year's Aldeburgh Festival and are devoted, respectively, to Mozart's A major Piano Concerto, K.414, and a pair of early Haydn Symphonies, Nos. 45 ("Farewell") and 55 ("Schoolmaster"). Liveliness of spirit rather than flawless execution is the hall-mark of these renderings; the Mozart, in particular, is most enjoyable and wholly absorbing.

The remainder of Decca's list seems rather workaday by comparison, with Brahms's First Symphony (Vienna Philharmonic/Krips), piano music by Bach played by Backhaus, a collection of Italian opera overtures and intermezzi under the singularly inappropriate title of "An Adventure in Sound" (L.S.O./Gamba) and an immaculate concert of music by Rimsky-Korsakov ("Tsar Saltan" Suite; "May Night" Overture; Russian Easter Festival) from Ansermet and the Suisse Romande. After Anita Cerquetti's astonishing Decca debut last month, another new soprano of some promise now contributes a recital of arias drawn from "Traviata," "Puritani," "Sonnambula," "Lucia," and "Boheme." She is Virginia Zeani who, as it happens, has just completed a most successful London appearance in a brief season of Italian Opera at the Stoll Theatre. Her "Lucia" was rapturously received and she is without doubt intelligent as well as comely though the voice as such is not particularly striking. (While on the subject of Decca's "rising" sopranos, I might mention that one of them, who hails from Norway and is not unknown to American audiences, is scheduled to sing a group of Grieg songs at one of our Promenade Concerts this summer.)

In conclusion I should like to single out a record which, though well outside the customary orbit of this column, has proved such a delight to young and old alike during the past few weeks that it must qualify for a special citation. It is a twelve-inch Parlophone LP entitled "At the Drop of a Hat," and it perpetuates one of the most successful theatrical entertainments of the current London season: a two-man Intimate Revue written, composed and presented by Michael Flanders and Donald Swann. In the past, this team has produced much excellent revue material for other artists and Flanders was also responsible for a recent new English version of Stravinsky's "The Soldier's Tale," while Swann, a most accomplished pianist, contributed to and took part in the Hoffnung Festival Concert. Relying entirely on the wit and bizarre charm of their material, as well as the polish and zest of their presentation (their only "props" are Swann's piano and the polio-stricken Flanders's wheel-chair), they have drawn packed houses to the Fortune Theatre for the past five months and the record, made at an actual performance, should serve to enliven the dreariest party. Most intimate revues tend towards a rather parochial humor, but in "At the Drop of a Hat" the targets are mostly of a universal kind—they include such as hi-fi addicts, modern furnishing trends, and political non-conformism. In addition Messrs. Flanders and Swann have developed a particularly delightful brand of nonsense songs about animals, one of which—"The Hippopotamus Songs"—even attained hit-parade status, and it would surprise me greatly if this refreshing disc should fail to provoke agreeable mirth across the Atlantic. —THOMAS HEINITZ.

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# Mainstream

*Continued from page 35*

considered, that is not too blatantly electronic.

"Tal" (Verve MGV-8021) is Tal Farlow, and he is heard throughout the session as the focal force in an invigorating, integrated trio composed of Eddie Costa on piano and Vinnie Burke as the big-tones bass anchor of the unit. Costa, equally known as a vibist, is muscularly sparse in style; is not overly adventurous harmonically; but is uncommonly powerful rhythmically. He plays with a head-shaking, rolling momentum that is exhilarating. Mr. Farlow is not only technically fluent, a not too rare attainment this decade, but he has an emotional "story" to tell as well. He is swift, sensitive, and continually resourceful in a manner that challenges and engages the imagination.

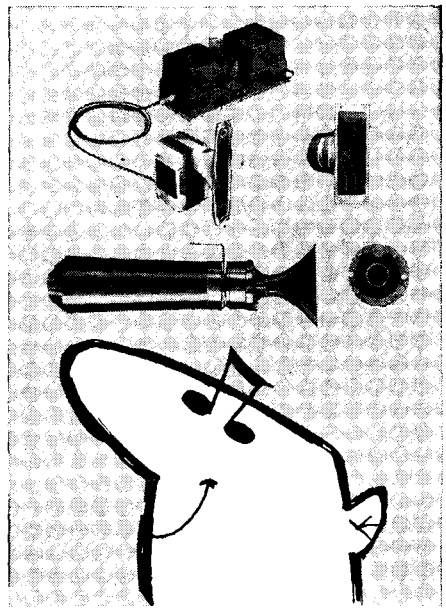
Another guitarist of subtle wit and fluid musical perception is Jimmy Raney. "Jimmy Raney—in Three Attitudes" (ABC-Paramount ABC-167) places Mr. Raney in a quartet and two different quintets. The featured sidemen (all do not appear on all tracks) are the astonishing, horn-flexible bassist, Red Mitchell; the absorbingly intelligent valve trombonist, Bob Brookmeyer; and the firm, swinging tenor, Al Cohn.

Art Pepper, a plunging, emotional modern altoist who is also conceptually astute has been a prolific visitor to California recording studios since his return to the jazz scene a few months ago after a therapeutic time away. Never before, however, has Pepper had such a boiling foundation on which to improvise as in "Art Pepper Meets the Rhythm Section" (Contemporary C3532). The pulsating steam behind him is fired by bassist Paul Chambers, pianist Red Garland, and drummer Philly Joe Jones. At the time of recording, the three were members of the Miles Davis Quintet, and had annealed themselves in a year and a half into the strongest rhythm section in modern jazz. It is a pity they have been torn asunder by the dissolution of the Davis combo. Pepper, incidentally, as a boy used to practice along with Muggsy Spanier records, and there is a "Jazz Me Blues" in this set that is honestly appreciative in intent if not essential style of Dixieland antecedents in jazz, but might nonetheless traumatize Eddie Condon.

George Russell, after several years away for study and the development of his "Lydian Concept of Tonal Organization" is again active as a jazz composer, a composer who prefers to find his forms, for the most part, from within the jazz material with which he works rather than the usages of classical music. Russell has already indicated in his "The Day John Brown Was Hanged" for the "Hal McKusick Jazz Workshop" LP (Victor LPM-1366) and his "All About Rosie" for the recent Brandeis University concert of commissioned jazz works that he is one of the most creative of young jazz composers and one of the closest to his own admirable criterion of what a jazz composer should be. "The best of our jazz composers, down through the years," he writes, "have: (1) embraced the instrumental improvisation that jazz is so noted for, (2) captured the vitality of its strongest improvisers and (3) proceeded to improvise, with greater and greater subtlety, jazz compositions that sound as fresh and as uninhibited as a compelling solo by an inspired jazz soloist."

In his first album under his own name, "George Russell: The Jazz Workshop" (RCA Victor LPM-1372), Russell provides a significant, multiple evocative program of modern jazz composition that is rooted in basic jazz and pre-jazz material such as the blues and spirituals but is also consistently and cohesively personal. There is incisive drama, humor, moving lyricism, and the emergence of a compositional style that *is* composition and is also jazz. Mr. Russell's exemplary associates are Barry Galbraith, guitar; Art Farmer, trumpet; Hal McKusick, alto; Milt Hinton, bass; Bill Evans, piano; and Joe Harris, drums. Victor, whose jazz line has not been especially distinguished in recent years, is to be congratulated for being so valuable a catalyst in this case.

Mal Waldron, a spare, intense, probing pianist is also a jazz writer of capacity. His first collection of his own, "Mal-1," includes two of his own originals and a work by Benny Golson, among others. Improvisation, however, plays more than a co-equal role in the album and much of the set's primary excitement arises from the solos of trumpeter Idrees Sulieman, altoist Gigi Gryce and Waldron, with understanding rhythm background supplied by bassist Julian Euell and drummer Arthur Edgehill. There is a challenging attractive juxtaposition of 3/4 and 4/4 in "Dee's Dilemma," one of the Waldron originals, and other thoughtful evidences of Waldron's desire and ability to create more stimulating frameworks for jazz improvising although he is not yet the "composer" Russell is. It is heartening to hear the continued development of the plangent Sulieman, an incandescent talent.

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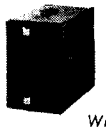

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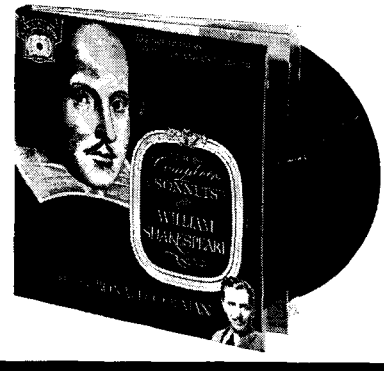

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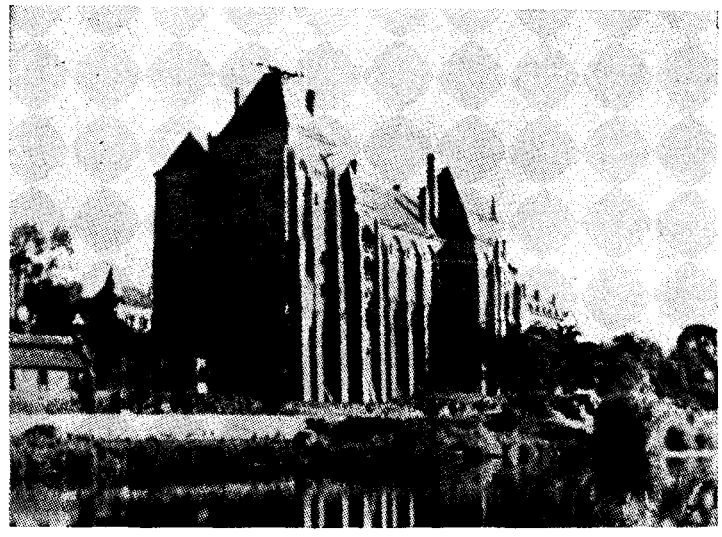

The Abbey of Saint Pierre de Solesmes—"the best-recorded versions of Gregorian chant."

# WHEN VOICES WERE MUSIC

By HERBERT WEINSTOCK

"WEBSTER'S New International Dictionary" defines an *omnium gatherum* as "A miscellaneous collection of all sorts of things or persons; a confused mixture or medley; also a place or receptacle for holding such a collection." What, in short, Johann Sebastian Bach, referring to music, would have called a *quodlibet*. Well, this review of eight largely unrelated records is intended to be an *omnium gatherum;* it will not, I hope, turn out instead to be a gallimaufry ("A hash or ragout of liver, heart, kidney, or the like, with edible parts of the head").

It begins where modern Western music as we know it took its chief beginning: with Gregorian Chant. The Choir of the Monks of the Abbey of Saint Pierre de Solesmes, under the leadership of Dom Joseph Gajard, O.S.B., performs eloquently and reverently on two London records, each with two arranged suites of Chant: LL 1463, $3.98, entitled "Pentecost" and "Corpus Christi," and LL 1464, $3.98, entitled "Ascension" and "Assumption." The entirely lifelike recording-in-depth of highly inflected unaccompanied singing makes these not only the best version of Solesmes chanting, but also the best recorded versions of Gregorian Chant I have ever heard.

The notes on LL 1463 are by Dom Joseph Gajard himself, and they are informative and even critical. Of one section of the "Corpus Christi" music, he winningly writes: "As far as the Communion is concerned the choice of this melody is perhaps to be regretted. Its enthusiastic joy is little suited to this rather austere text, apart from the fact that some errors have been made in the adaptation." Such respect for the text in hand, such refusal to "improve," is now so rare as to be notable. The unsigned notes on LL 1464, however, puzzle me by referring to these collections of plainsong as "Masses." The texts sung, consisting in one case, for example, of Introit, Gradual, Antiphon, Sequence, Offertory, Communion, and Alleluia, are not the liturgical text of the Catholic Mass. This fact makes doubly regrettable the failure of London to supply printed versions of what it is, actually, that the Monks of Solesmes are here singing. But these quibblings should not deter anyone interested in the Solesmes version of the Chant or in plainsong exquisitely chanted from hearing these extraordinarily moving records.

In 1950 in Brussels, the fifteenth-century musical forces of the renowned Chapelle de Bourgogne were re-constituted, the aim being to revivify in performance the music of Burgundy's greatness. Now the Choristers and Musicians of the Chapelle de Bourgogne make their recording debut on a London-L'Oiseau-Lyre record (OL 50104, $4.98). The music is a Mass attributed to Gilles Binchois (1400?-1460) and secular pieces, both vocal and instrumental, by Heinrich Isaac, Thomas Créquillon, Gérard Turnhout, Johannes Ockeghem, and Heinrich Finck—all of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Under the direction of Bernardin Van Eeckhout, these musicians present what strikes me as expertly mounted archeological reconstruction. Except for occasional passages, I judge most of

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the music on this record to be too exotic to win new recruits to the ranks of enthusiasts already familiar with it. Its historic interest greatly outweighs its interest as musical communication. The notes, by Paul Collaer, Director of the Chapelle de Bourgogne, are informative up to a point—the point at which the printed texts of what is sung should have been, but have not been provided.

Overwhelmingly beautiful singing by the Vienna Akademie Kammerchor, conducted by Günther Theuring, makes Westminster's new recording of Palestrina's "Missa Papae Marcelli" easily the most desirable version of this towering masterwork which I have ever heard, live or recorded. The twenty-four singers, twelve men and twelve women, are so immersed in the style and the techniques of the music at hand as to permit Palestrina to speak without intermediary to this day and this hour. The Latin text and an English translation are included in the unsigned notes, which are excellent and free of mythological accretions. (Why, incidentally, must they be presented in extraordinarily hideous typography on the back of a sleeve of which the front—a view of the interior of St. Peter's, Rome, in gold and black—is one of the handsomest I have seen?) An astonishing omission mars this otherwise scrupulously handled recording: at the beginning of the Credo, the music and text for "Credo in unum Deum" have fallen out (in transcribing from tape?), leaving the succeeding text, with its nouns in the accusative case, dangling verbless!

ON two other new Westminster recordings, Michael Howard conducts The Renaissance Singers in music by William Byrd. The Mass for Four Voices and the Mass for Five Voices (XWN 18401, $3.98) are well sung, but not well enough to blot out memories of the classic performance of the five-voice Mass recorded about twenty years ago by the Fleet Street Choir under the leadership of T. B. Lawrence, perhaps the first entirely satisfactory choral recording. Here the engineers have done very well with difficult material, and the sleeve notes by Harold Rutland are judicious. No printed text is supplied in either Latin or English translation. On the other record (XWN 18402, $3.98), the same forces perform eleven of Byrd's motets from the 1605 and 1607 books of Gradualia. Again, and more damagingly, no printed texts.

Byrd was, of course, a Roman Catholic when to be a Catholic in England was to live under severe restrictions. This may help to explain the inescapable impression that his Catholic Church music is very often much more deeply convinced and convincing than the music he wrote for the Church of England. In any case, the music on these two Westminster records convincingly repeats Byrd's claim to being the greatest English composer before Purcell—for which reason it is sad that the performances could not have gone beyond the merely good to the arrestingly excellent.

A Deutsche Grammophon Archive Production record (ARC-3038, $5.98) contains two anthems and five very secular songs by Purcell. The Saltire Singers (Margaret Fraser, soprano; Constance Mullay, alto; Duncan Robertson, tenor; and Frederick Westcott, baritone), with accompaniments provided in varying combinations by recorders, German flute, violin, viola, cello, doublebass, portative organ, and harpsichord, simultaneously do the music justice and make the texts comprehensible even without the printed texts provided. In the fine anthems, the performers do not, it seems to me, entirely come out from behind the pall that so often falls over scholarly re-constitutions of music of the seventeenth century and earlier. But in the secular songs, with their charmingly Rabelaisian texts, they seem to forget the distances of time. Instead, they let themselves go, and with wholly enlivening results. The recording is exactly right; the accompanying notes and texts are models of what these things should be.

The "Missa Papae Marcelli" excepted, the last and best is the Vanguard-Bach Guild recording (BG 559, $4.98) of Purcell's 1692 "Ode for St. Cecilia's Day." Michael Tippett (who, with Walter Bergmann, "prepared the edition") conducts with creative musicality the Ambrosian Singers, the Kalmar Chamber Orchestra of London, and—as trumpet soloist—our old friend George Eskdale. The "Ode" is a light-shot, wonderful work, and the six soloists who convey its flowery, Italianate, instantly convincing score sing so well that they should be named: Alfred Deller, counter-tenor; April Cantelo, soprano; Wilfred Brown, tenor; Maurice Bevan, baritone; Peter Salmon, counter-tenor; and John Frost, bass. Like the instrumentalists, they serve Purcell and Mr. Tippett with blazing artistry, even making Nicholas Brady's "poem" sound a not unworthy companion for the score. Again, as so often with Purcell's richest accomplishments, the "Ode" makes obvious that much more of Handel's Englishness than critics have sometimes allowed consisted of his acquaintance with the supple, clamorous, lively music of Henry Purcell.


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# THE BISTRO BELT

By STANLEY GREEN

IN ORDER to capture the atmosphere of her actual night club routine, RCA Victor dispatched a crew of technicians on several evenings last winter to record an on-the-scene performance by Lena Horne at the Waldorf-Astoria's Empire Room. The result of their labors is now available on Victor LOC-1023 ($4.98), and somehow it just doesn't seem to have been worth all the trouble. For Miss Horne, assuredly one of our most glittering singing personalities, seems compelled to exaggerate almost every nuance in her material when confronted by members of the saloon set, the net impression to the home listener being that of a charming young lady with an effortful and overly self-assured technique.

Of the fifteen selections, she is perhaps at her best in a medley of four Cole Porter gems, "How's Your Romance?" and "After You—Who?" both from "The Gay Divorcee," "Love of My Life" from "The Pirate," and "It's All Right With Me" from "Can-Can." Among the rest, there is a minor Harold Arlen-Dorothy Fields collaboration "Today I Love Ev'rybody" from the film "The Farmer Takes a Wife," the wry "Let Me Love You" by Bart Howard, Porter's galvanic "From This Moment On," and a particularly tedious piece of single-minded vulgarity called "I Love to Love." The audience itself makes up a considerable part of the performance, interrupting with coughs, the clattering of dishes, guffaws, applause (during selections), and whistles (after selections). Nat Brandwynne's Orchestra, conducted by Miss Horne's husband Lennie Hayton, punctuates the proceedings five times with her exit music, thereby conveying the impression that she is continually being called back for encores.

Although Jane Powell has long been associated with marshmallow coated Hollywood musicals, she has recently become a most welcome addition to the ranks of night-life entertainers. Her latest record, "Can't We Be Friends?" (Verve MGV-2023; $3.98), brings together a dozen numbers that she has sung in Las Vegas and Miami, and they are all brilliantly done. Blessed with a Lydian voice of remarkable color, Miss Powell's interpretations are marked by unerring taste and style, creating something fresh and exciting in even the most familiar selections. Her repertory consists of such standards as the Kay Swift-Paul James title song, the always touching "Let's Face the Music and Dance" by Irving Berlin, Duke Ellington's "I Got It Bad," and two compositions by Harold Arlen and Leo Robin, "For Every Man There's a Woman" and "Hooray For Love."

Polly Bergen, a night-club singer and actress, played the part of a bygone nightclub singer and actress, Helen Morgan, in a television play not long ago, and has assembled a program consisting of twelve torch ballads (less one, "Broken Hearted" by Brown, DeSylva, and Henderson) that were associated with Miss Morgan. In "Bergen Sings Morgan" (Columbia CL 994; $3.98), she makes no attempt to imitate the teary, delicate soprano of the late singer, but rather presents the selections in her own husky, overwrought fashion that somehow misses the flavor of these lachrymose songs. In addition to the more familiar items, Miss Bergen offers Warren and Dubin's "The Little Things You Used to Do," "Sand In My Shoes" (the Louis Alter piece, not the more familiar one of the same title by Victor Schertzinger and Frank Loesser), and Jay Gorney's "What Wouldn't I Do for That Man."

Another after dark performer to identify herself with the tunes, if not the style, of still another singer is Frances Wayne, whose current recital (Brunswick BL 54022; $3.98) contains six numbers popularized by Ethel Waters. She also includes two ("Bill" and "Mean to Me") that are part of the Polly Bergen set, which only proves that lines can't be drawn too sharply in these matters. Although Miss Wayne lacks the proper humorous touch for Cole Porter's "Miss Otis Regrets," her full-throated, slightly intense approach is just right for such staple fare as "Am I Blue?," "Stormy Weather," and "I Just Couldn't Take It, Baby." She is imaginatively backed by an orchestra conducted by her husband, Neal Hefti.

Miss Helen Grayco, whose husband, Spike Jones, does *not* accompany her, has a rather small, tremulous voice which she uses intelligently in a collection called "After Midnight" (Vik LX-1066; $3.98). The mood is relaxed and intimate—as might be expected—with the standard tinkling piano, moaning saxophones and strings.

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## LETTERS TO THE
# RECORDINGS EDITOR

### SYMPHONIC CENSORSHIP

MANY OF US who regard the time-honored Sunday afternoon broadcasts of the New York Philharmonic-Symphony as a national institution were astounded to discover that these superb programs have been eliminated from the airways in the greater St. Louis area. For the past year a playback by means of tape recording has been substituted on a late Sunday evening hour. This disaster was perpetrated by the St. Louis Symphony Society in order to "eliminate competition with local performances," one of the directors informed me. Effective pressure was exerted on the local CBS outlet by several prominent civic leaders. In my opinion the whole affair is absurd. It seems most unreasonable to presume that frustrated radio listeners will load a family of small kiddies into the station wagon and converge with others on the local auditorium simply because they have been deprived of a familiar radio broadcast. In terms of ethics and the Common Good the entire action seems morally somewhat beneath so exalted an institution as the symphony orchestra of a great city. If the maneuver were to be repeated over the nation it might well lead to the termination of the great Philharmonic broadcasts.

GORDON M. SCHOEPFLE.

Webster Groves, Mo.

### "IMPROVED" BRUCKNER

AS A FRANK admirer of the music of Anton Bruckner, I have long found Winthrop Sargeant's periodic articles on the recorded versions of Bruckner's music both knowledgeable and extremely helpful. For this reason I was surprised that, in *SR* Apr. 27, he entirely omitted mentioning that the version of Bruckner's Fifth Symphony recorded by Hans Knappertsbusch is not the original, but rather the result of one of the numerous reworkings various Bruckner Symphonies have undergone, this one being, I believe, by Franz Schalk. I know that I, for one, was extremely disappointed in this recording for that reason, having hoped that—due to Knappertsbusch's authority and flair for this style of music—we would have a recording faithful to both the letter and spirit of Bruckner.

EDWIN R. KAMMIN.

Paris, France.

### SILENT RIVALS

I SHOULD LIKE to compliment Mr. Peter Yates on the production of what is, perhaps, the most remarkable sentence ever written in musical criticism: "Through Webern's polyphony, however simple or however complex, the most persistent quality is silence—shaped and enrobed with a richness rivalled only by Beethoven in rare moments" (*SR* May 25). Put into simpler language, this seems to mean that when Webern wrote silence—*i.e.*, nothing—he rivalled Beethoven in a few rare moments when Beethoven wrote an equally wondrous silence. The thesis, one must admit, seems to establish rather clearly that, in at least one field, Webern rivalled Beethoven. To one listener it's the only field.

LOWELL S. GOIN, M.D.

Los Angeles, Calif.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The field, however, is extensive, vis: "The rest is silence."*

### MORE PAPA MOZART

I AM JUST NOW getting a chance to write you regarding a letter written by Mr. Phil Leavitt of Hartford on recordings of Leopold Mozart's music (*SR* Mar. 30). As a graduate student at Yale University School of Music, in 1950, I played a Concerto for Clarino and Orchestra by Leopold Mozart in my degree recital; I also played it several times elsewhere that year, at Putney, Vermont, at the Hall of Graduate Studies at Yale, and on a couple of other occasions. The edition I played was from the "Denkmäler in Osterreich," and was transcribed by Max Seifert. There was at that time a recording of this concerto on a European label by a French trumpeter whose name escapes me now. This concerto is in two movements, in the key of D major, and is scored for clarino (keyed trumpet) solo and strings and cembalo. There is a large volume of music by this composer in the "Denkmäler," most of it quite interesting in content and easy to play. I quite agree with Mr. Leavitt that he should be brought out in more recitals.

GEORGE V. DOREN.

West Newton, Mass.

### NO MORE CHATTERING

DO I DETECT a note of desperation, now that Tebaldi has so decisively outsung Callas at the Met, in Herbert Weinstock's what-do-voices-matter cutburst? One cannot help admiring the syntactical broken-field running of the more articulate members of the Callas claque as they attempt to outmaneuver the fact that she can't sing very well. It seems now that Acting is the thing—or Projection, or Dynamics, or Operatic Understanding—and let us, as Mr. Weinstock urges, "stop chattering about golden tone and vocal honey."

JAMES J. GODWIN.

Winchester, Mass.


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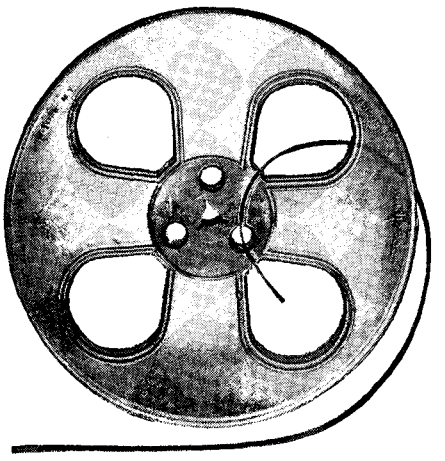

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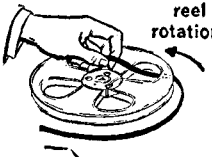
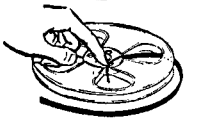



2. Drop tape into slot, leaving about 1 inch projecting beyond the hub with tape slack on both sides of recording head.



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# Portables

*Continued from page 35*

erable. It is omitted from the tabulation because it is not nominally a portable—that is to say, it lacks a handle. This detail aside, it can be picked up and carried quite as readily as lots of the others.

Up to this point, discussion of reproduction in any truly musical terms is either hypothetical or hypocritical. Various units in each of the price categories will render dependable if limited service. If pops are all you play, those in the $50-$100 category offer several usable choices; if you care about the symphony orchestra, or a piano deeply sounded, the $100-$150 variety will give much better results, but also within clearly defined limitations.

I cannot answer for the needs of others, but, in a paraphrase of Patrick Henry, I might say "Give me Liberty or give me—nothing." I refer to the new unit called the "Scott," which has taken the place of the previous Libertyphone, which was for long the uncrowned king of portables. The present instrument exceeds its predecessor in featuring a ten-watt amplifier, diamond stylus for microgroove, the necessary equalization circuits, jacks making possible the use of radio tuner or tape, etc. Topping all is the speaker assembly in a detachable cover, excellently designed for better fidelity than would seem possible in a shallow assemblage. For that matter, the turntable-amplifier-output unit can be utilized to feed an existing speaker system of wider response; it has the latent power. Covering fabrics and overall design are in accordance with Liberty's high standards. Understand, it can't be dangled over an arm while you search for railroad fare: but once you are there it will *perform*.

The Pilot "Encore" is comparable in possessing equalization circuits, a GE pickup, an honest-to-goodness amplifier, and various auxiliary jacks that enhance its utility. The speaker components are not as well-sounding to my ear, and the detachable feature is missing. The Emerson 875, in this price category, adds AM-FM radio, and the Bogen VP 17X has a constantly variable turntable (29-36 rpm), 12-inch speaker (detachable), ten-watt amplifier, and GE pickup. However, it lacks a changer, and is frankly designed for classroom-demonstration purposes rather than social portability. In some circumstances, however, the muscular means may justify the musical ends.

A final aside: no firm recommendations have been entered in the two lower price categories for the simple reason that local circumstances may determine economic advantage. New York market conditions are, admittedly, unusual, but where a machine listed at $129.50 can—for reasons of a dealer's convenience—drop to $105, some variation may be anticipated elsewhere. Confucius (or one of his Chinese descendants) say: "Wise man shop three times before buying." Likewise, in hi-fly. —THE EDITOR.

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# KINGSLEY DOUBLE-CROSTIC NO. 1214

Reg. U.S. Patent Office

By Doris Nash Wortman

| DEFINITIONS | WORDS |
|---|---|
| A. Heads Edgar's list of dogs in "King Lear." | 101 76 113 124 137 2 155 |
| B. Head of Ismailian Mohammedans (2 wds. followed by "III"; 1877- ). | 145 165 35 63 118 37 11 |
| C. Disconcerted (colloq.). | 19 1 20 188 127 87 40 |
| D. Serving with others of a body administering the affairs of an institution (3 wds.). | 126 80 12 107 158 95 109 39 181 3 |
| E. Popular adjective for King James I's parliament in 1614. | 122 57 175 177 72 97 |
| F. Greet, or indicate a special person or thing, by inclining the head (2 wds.). | 171 83 103 62 34 |
| G. How Malvolio thought of the soul, in "Twelfth Night." | 74 163 141 128 14 |
| H. What the Bacchanal's hair and ivy crown fell over (Swinburne: "Atalanta in Calydon"). | 119 58 78 68 100 130 144 54 |
| I. The English "Captain" who wrote "Mr. Midshipman Easy" (1792-1848). | 131 73 38 49 105 148 157 |
| J. Arranged correctly for concerted musical instruments. | 115 146 129 162 53 33 46 5 186 114 64 75 |
| K. Followed by Word S, how one dredges up deepsea fish but does not deal cards (2 wds.). | 59 98 167 125 21 56 |

| DEFINITIONS | WORDS |
|---|---|
| L. Steal transportation by freight train in a way popular with hoboes (3 wds.). | 77 99 27 93 154 47 44 111 41 8 160 |
| M. Appellation of Antiochus V of Syria (2nd cent. B.C.). | 67 142 9 133 23 89 52 |
| N. Better find a generous "Brother" before you part with this (2 wds.). | 121 22 187 86 50 151 90 7 |
| O. Ascribably. | 170 6 15 164 30 140 13 136 180 |
| P. Whelk whose shell bears a sort of crown of spikes (2 wds.). | 147 79 45 176 88 173 152 134 24 |
| Q. The Apostolic Fathers wrote lots of them. | 102 43 82 123 161 174 96 55 |
| R. One of the highest class of official diviners of Ancient Rome. | 85 112 94 51 10 42 |
| S. See Word K. | 120 25 61 65 178 185 |
| T. The aim of "do-gooders" and of the modern female bra. | 60 36 183 29 116 106 |
| U. The gleam in a sweetheart's eye (not in Webster). | 69 16 81 108 26 4 149 66 135 |
| V. The thing that's going on right now, or is threatening to happen (2 wds.). | 17 166 156 117 153 182 132 |
| W. Sufficiently. | 150 71 91 143 169 |
| X. Controvertible (more familiar in the negative form). | 92 139 31 179 159 172 48 104 184 18 |
| Y. Jewish brides. | 138 70 84 168 32 110 28 |

## DIRECTIONS

*To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd WORDS, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. Alongside each definition, there is a row of dashes—one for each letter in the required word. When you have guessed a word, write it on the dashes, and also write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. . . When the squares are all filled in, you will find that you have completed a quotation from some published work. If read up and down, the letters in the diagram have no meaning. . . Black squares indicate ends of words; if there is no black square at the right side of the diagram, the word carries over to the next line. . . When all the WORDS are filled in, their initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Of great help to the solver are this acrostic feature and the relative shapes of words in the diagram as they develop. Authority for spellings and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition.*

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | 1 C | 2 A | 3 D | 4 U | 5 J | 6 O | 7 N | 8 L | ■ | 9 M | 10 R | 11 B | 12 D |
| ■ | 13 O | 14 G | ■ | 15 O | 16 U | 17 V | 18 X | 19 C | ■ | 20 C | 21 K | 22 N | 23 M | ■ | 24 P | 25 S |
| 26 U | 27 L | 28 Y | ■ | 29 T | 30 O | ■ | 31 X | 32 Y | 33 J | 34 F | ■ | 35 B | ■ | 36 T | 37 B | 38 I |
| 39 D | 40 C | 41 L | 42 R | ■ | 43 Q | 44 L | 45 P | 46 J | ■ | 47 L | 48 X | 49 I | 50 N | ■ | 51 R | 52 M |
| 53 J | 54 H | 55 Q | 56 K | 57 E | ■ | 58 H | 59 K | 60 T | ■ | 61 S | 62 F | 63 B | 64 J | ■ | 65 S | 66 U |
| 67 M | ■ | 68 H | 69 U | 70 Y | 71 W | 72 E | ■ | 73 I | 74 G | 75 J | ■ | 76 A | 77 L | 78 H | ■ | 79 P |
| 80 D | 81 U | 82 Q | 83 F | 84 Y | 85 R | 86 N | 87 C | ■ | 88 P | 89 M | 90 N | 91 W | 92 X | 93 L | 94 R | 95 D |
| 96 Q | 97 E | ■ | 98 K | 99 L | 100 H | 101 A | 102 Q | 103 F | ■ | 104 X | 105 I | ■ | 106 T | 107 D | 108 U | ■ |
| 109 D | 110 Y | 111 L | 112 R | 113 A | 114 J | ■ | 115 J | 116 T | ■ | 117 V | 118 B | 119 H | ■ | 120 S | 121 N | 122 E |
| 123 Q | 124 A | ■ | 125 K | 126 D | 127 C | 128 G | ■ | 129 J | 130 H | 131 I | 132 V | 133 M | 134 P | 135 U | ■ | 136 O |
| 137 A | 138 Y | 139 X | ■ | 140 O | ■ | 141 G | 142 M | 143 W | 144 H | 145 B | 146 J | 147 P | ■ | 148 I | 149 U | 150 W |
| 151 N | 152 P | 153 V | 154 L | ■ | 155 A | 156 V | 157 I | 158 D | ■ | 159 X | 160 L | ■ | 161 Q | 162 J | 163 G | 164 O |
| 165 B | 166 V | ■ | 167 K | 168 Y | 169 W | 170 O | 171 F | 172 X | ■ | 173 P | 174 Q | 175 E | ■ | 176 P | 177 E | 178 S |
| 179 X | 180 O | ■ | 181 D | 182 V | 183 T | 184 X | ■ | 185 S | 186 J | 187 N | 188 C | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |

Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 5 of this issue.



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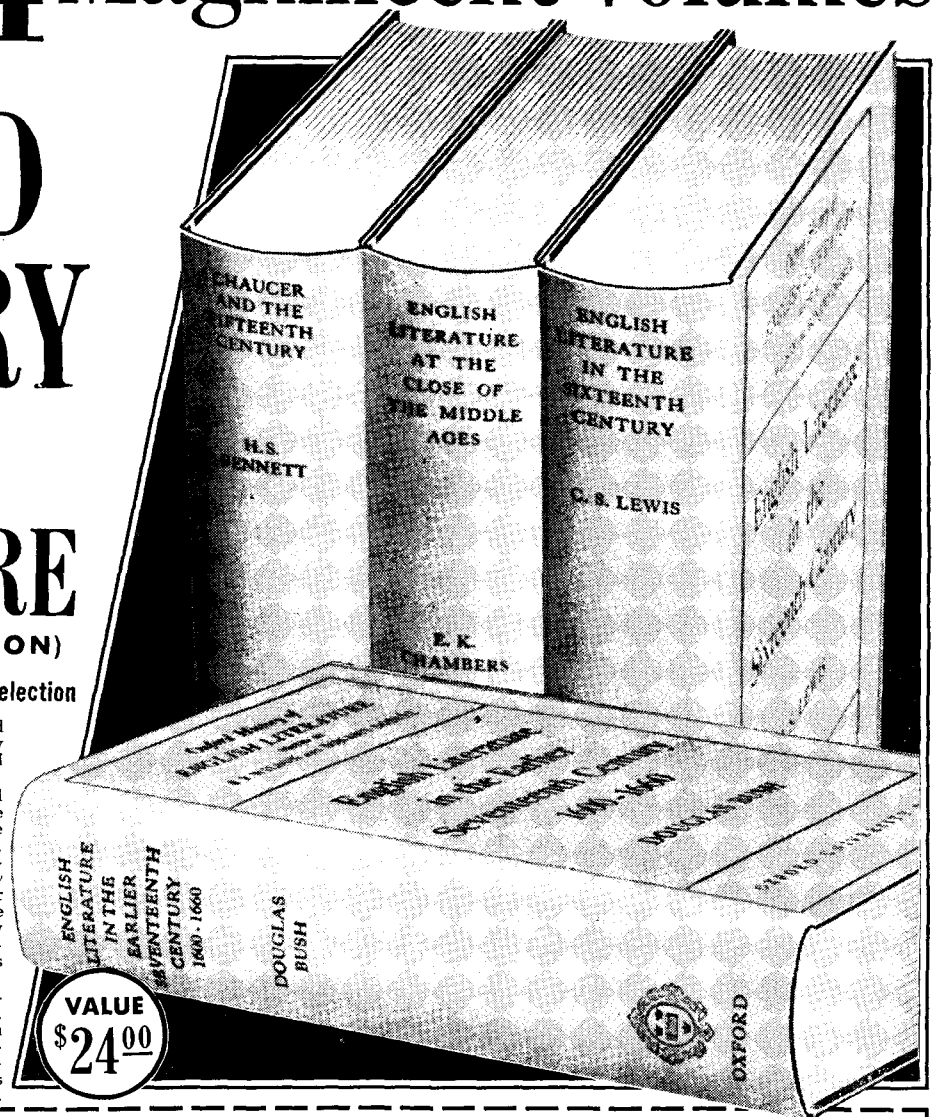
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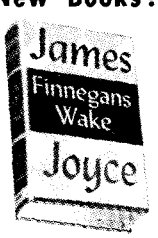


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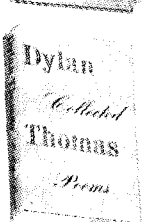


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